United Nations E/ICEF/2016/8

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 April 2016

Original: English

For information

United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
Annual session 2016
14-17 June 2016
Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit

Summary

In accordance with Executive Board decision 2001/4, the present report summarizes the response of UNICEF to the recommendations contained in recent reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) that are directly relevant to UNICEF. The nine reports included in this report were issued by the JIU from December 2014 through December 2015.

* E/ICEF/2016/5.

16-06241 (E) 220416

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) annually issues reports and notes addressed to the executive heads of United Nations organizations that have accepted the Unit's statute. Each report or note contains a series of recommendations for consideration by either the executive heads or the legislative/governing bodies of the organizations (see the list of reports and recommendations in annex I). The UNICEF report to its Executive Board provides, inter alia, a brief overview of the UNICEF response to relevant reports issued by the JIU from December 2014 through December 2015 and comments on JIU recommendations that have been directed to UNICEF (see annex II). The complete reports and notes of the JIU as well as any further annexes and comments, e.g., by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, may be obtained through the JIU website (www.unjiu.org) or through the hyperlinked titles of each report in section II of the present document.

2. Since the submission of the previous report (E/ICEF/2015/6) to the Executive Board at its annual session of 2015, UNICEF has continued to work with the JIU on various reviews conducted under its auspices and to follow up on the recommendations contained in the reports. This interaction on issues of common interest has increased the relevance of JIU reports, improved the implementation of their recommendations and enhanced transparency. Furthermore, member organizations of the Chief Executives Board have continued to provide consolidated responses to various JIU reports.

II. Overview of Joint Inspection Unit reports and recommendations

3. The nine reports of direct relevance to UNICEF are summarized below. Additional comments are provided on each report and the relevant recommendations in annex II.

A. Analysis of the evaluation function in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2014/6)

4. The report describes and analyses the evolution, development and status of the evaluation function in the United Nations system, as assessed in 2013. Its purpose is to help to strengthen the capacity of the evaluation function to meet professional standards, address emerging and global challenges across the system and contribute towards enhancing the value of the United Nations system.

UNICEF comments

5. UNICEF found this to be a useful report, containing a considerable amount of detailed evidence and analysis, while succeeding in reaching relevant conclusions and practical recommendations. The methodology used was generally sound, as it was based on agreed evaluation principles and standards. However, the report emphasized the role and performance of the central evaluation function and only limited attention was given to the decentralized evaluation function at the regional and country levels. The latter is an important dimension of the UNICEF evaluation

system. Nevertheless, the UNICEF evaluation function was found, overall, to be well developed and of a high standard. UNICEF was also found to be one of only three United Nations agencies committed to supporting national evaluation capacity development.

B. Use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities in the United Nations system organizations — country case studies: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and India (JIU/REP/2014/8)

6. The review provides an assessment from a system-wide perspective of the use of non-staff personnel, including relevant policies, regulations, contractual practices and associated managerial processes in the United Nations system organizations. It includes quantitative and qualitative information on the use of non-staff personnel; a comparative analysis of current organizational policies and practices; and evolutionary trends of non-staff categories within the total workforce of the JIU participating organizations.

UNICEF comments

7. The report offers critical insights into the use of consultants, along with the possible risks associated with the use of such types of contracting and staffing. UNICEF recently updated its consultant and individual contractor's policy as well as the associated business processes, which reflect most of the recommendations made in the report. UNICEF has developed guidelines and monitoring mechanisms; its non-staff policy calls for due consideration of gender and geographic diversity.

8. UNICEF notes that the overall value of the report could have been increased by means of a more thorough discussion of the reasons for and benefits of the engagement of non-staff personnel, along with the further highlighting of control measures that could ensure that delegated hiring managers use non-staff contracts appropriately. The decentralized use of non-staff contracts enables a greater level of agility and flexibility in staffing, which is particularly critical for organizations like UNICEF that rely on contingent staff to provide the surge capacity that allows rapid response to global demands, such as humanitarian emergencies.

9. As such, UNICEF is concerned that a call for a harmonized policy approach would risk disregarding the different natures of and environments in which United Nations agencies operate and, as a result, could have a negative impact on the quick delivery of results for children. In addition, UNICEF is concerned that producing such a "single" approach might not reflect the different needs, resources and work of each organization within the common system, thus hampering the needed flexibility. Moreover, UNICEF is concerned that predetermined remuneration levels, as recommended in the report, could constrain the full and effective application of the competitive selection processes that are based on the best-value-for-the-money principle.

C. Contract management and administration in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2014/9)

10. The JIU conducted the review to analyse how the organizations of the United Nations system manage contracts for goods and services after award, with a view to identifying good practices and lessons learned, exploring areas for further improvement and enhancing coherence system-wide.

UNICEF comments

11. UNICEF welcomes this report of the JIU on contract management and administration in the United Nations system, noting that the proper management of contract activities is a fundamental requirement for good management. United Nations organizations support most of the findings and recommendations included in the report, with many noting that they plan to apply the lessons learned to strengthen policies and procedures, as appropriate. For some organizations, it may not be conducive from a cost-benefit perspective to implement all the recommendations fully.

D. Evaluation of mainstreaming of full and productive employment and decent work by the United Nations system organizations: summary report (JIU/REP/2015/1)

12. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide information to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the legislative and governing bodies of the participating organizations and the members of Chief Executives Board on how the United Nations system organizations have implemented the resolutions aimed at mainstreaming or supporting the decent work agenda, with a view to using the lessons learned in the finalization of the post-2015 agenda. The purpose of the evaluation is not to review International Labour Organization (ILO) activities to mainstream decent work, but rather the United Nations system's response.

UNICEF comments

13. UNICEF welcomes the JIU report on the mainstreaming of full and productive employment and decent work. As noted in the report, UNICEF has mainstreamed the decent work agenda in the work of the organization within its mandate, particularly in the area of social protection as a key pillar of that agenda. UNICEF continues to strengthen its work in social protection and, consistent with recommendation 6 of the report, has already begun work to systematize linkages between social protection and other areas of the organization's work.

E. Recommendations to the General Assembly of the United Nations for the determination of parameters for a comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States (JIU/REP/2015/2)

14. The objective of the report was to make recommendations in order to facilitate the work of the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session in determining, as soon as possible, and by no later than March 2015, the parameters of a comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States, with a view to enhancing the overall effectiveness of such support and respective roles in supporting the sustainable development of small island developing States in order to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach by the United Nations system to further improve and strengthen its overall effectiveness.

UNICEF comments

15. UNICEF welcomes the JIU report and agrees with the key recommendations aimed at strengthening the effectiveness, coordination, accountability, communications and synergies among institutional partners for better service delivery for small island developing States.

F. Cooperation among the United Nations regional commissions (JIU/REP/2015/3)

16. The objective of the review is to assess, as applicable to different regional contexts, the relevance and effectiveness of (a) cooperation among the regional commissions; (b) cooperation between the regional commissions and other United Nations system entities, especially in the framework of the Regional Coordination Mechanism; and (c) the interface between regional and global governance and decision-making bodies of the regional commissions.

UNICEF comments

17. UNICEF welcomes the JIU report and finds its recommendations useful to further strengthen regional linkages towards a fit-for-purpose United Nations development system at the regional and country levels.

G. Public information and communications policies and practices in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2015/4)

18. The objectives of the review are: (a) to provide a comparative assessment of the respective arrangements relating to the public information and communications function within the United Nations system organizations and to propose benchmarks for a strategic approach to communications; and (b) to assess the current mechanisms of system-wide coordination among these organizations, both at their headquarters and in the field.

UNICEF comments

19. UNICEF welcomes the JIU report and concurs with its main findings. UNICEF especially welcomes the recommendations made by the JIU to enhance the strategic role of public information and communications functions, but would urge that even more explicit emphasis be placed on the strategic importance of communications in public advocacy and engagement to bring about sustainable change, and not just for the purposes of public information.

H. Review of activities and resources devoted to address climate change in the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2015/5)

20. The review provides an overview of existing resources and activities devoted to addressing climate change across the organizations of the United Nations system, and expects to contribute to enhanced coordination and increased effectiveness of the work of the organizations regarding climate change. It also aims to support the governing bodies and the organizations of the United Nations system in creating the instruments necessary for future improvement in monitoring and reporting and, importantly, in accountability regarding the use of resources and the implementation of activities to respond to the system-wide mandate on sustainable development.

UNICEF comments

21. The report constitutes a timely informative input, providing an overview of activities and resources used within the United Nations system based on responses received from the JIU participating organizations and multilateral environmental agreement secretariats, especially given the decision of the High-level Committee on Programmes, made at its thirtieth session in October 2015, that expressed support for the need to develop a system-wide approach to coordinated action on climate change. The strategy will take a phased approach; a draft of the first part of the strategy was presented at the Committee meeting, held in March 2016. UNICEF is providing inputs to the task team that is preparing the strategy.

I. Review of the organizational ombudsman services across the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2015/6)

22. The objective of the review was to make an independent assessment of the functioning of the ombudsman offices in United Nations system organizations. The review seeks to map the ombudsman policies and practices across the United Nations system, including reviewing and comparing their mandates and office structures, their allocation of human and financial resources relative to the size of the organization and their operations, the accessibility of ombudsman services to the staff of the organization and the reporting lines to and cooperation with senior management and the legislative bodies. In addition, the review was to capture and analyse the perceptions of the main groups of clients (staff and management) and their satisfaction with the services provided by the Offices of the Ombudsman. The JIU review was also to provide an assessment of practices and prospects as well as of the limitations of cooperation among ombudsmen in different entities of the

United Nations system and to identify good practices in the activities of the Offices of the Ombudsman in the system.

UNICEF comments

23. The recommendations are generally supportive of the ombudsman function in the United Nations system, as an informal mechanism for dispute resolution. The Office of the Ombudsman for United Nations Funds and Programmes welcomes the attention that this report gives to an often underutilized and misunderstood organizational resource for resolving workplace issues: informal conflict resolution. Some recommendations are welcomed, and if implemented, could enhance awareness of the added value of the ombudsman function in helping to foster a work environment in which the strategic objectives of the organization can be realized.

Ongoing and forthcoming Joint Inspection Unit reports and notes

24. UNICEF is participating in ongoing JIU reviews scheduled for completion in 2016 and looks forward to presenting its comments on them to the Executive Board at its annual session of 2016. Below is the preliminary list of such reports:

(a) Review of administrative services delivery in selected United Nations system organizations (expected completion: 2016);

(b) Review of knowledge management in the United Nations system (expected completion: 2016);

(c) Donor-led accountability and oversight reviews in United Nations system organizations (expected completion: 2016);

(d) Comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States: final findings (expected completion: 2016);

(e) Review of travel policies in the United Nations system (expected completion: 2016);

(f) System-wide review of results-based management, phase II (expected completion: 2016);

(g) Independent system-wide evaluation mechanism I: Meta-evaluation and synthesis of United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) evaluations with a particular focus on poverty eradication (expected completion: 2016);

(h) Independent system-wide evaluation mechanism II: Evaluation of the contribution of the United Nations development system to strengthen national capacities for statistical analysis and data collection to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internally agreed development goals (expected completion: 2016);

(i) Fraud prevention and detection in the United Nations system (expected completion: 2016);

(j) Status of the internal audit function in the United Nations development system (expected completion: 2016).

Annex I

List of Joint Inspection Unit reports and recommendations, December 2014 — December 2015

JIU report symbol	*Report title*	*Total number of recommendations contained in the report*	*Total number of recommendations addressed to UNICEF Executive Head*	*Total number of recommendations addressed to UNICEF Executive Board*
JIU/REP/2014/6	Analysis of the evaluation function in the United Nations system	9	5	2
JIU/REP/2014/8	Use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities in the United Nations system organizations — country case studies: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and India	13	11	1
JIU/REP/2014/9	Contract management and administration in the United Nations system	12	9	2
JIU/REP/2015/1	Evaluation of mainstreaming of full and productive employment and decent work by the United Nations system organizations: summary report	6	1	0
JIU/REP/2015/2	Recommendations to the General Assembly of the United Nations for the determination of parameters for a comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States	6	0	0
JIU/REP/2015/3	Cooperation among the United Nations regional commissions	7	0	0
JIU/REP/2015/4	Public information and communications policies and practices in the United Nations system	6	5	1
JIU/REP/2015/5	Review of activities and resources devoted to address climate change in the United Nations system organizations	6	4	1
JIU/REP/2015/6	Review of the organizational ombudsman services across the United Nations system	8	7	1
Total		**73**	**42**	**8**

Annex II

Summary of the status of Joint Inspection Unit recommendations addressed to UNICEF, December 2014-December 2015

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Analysis of the evaluation function in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2014/6)	
1. Recommendations addressed to the Executive Board/legislative body	
Recommendation 3 The legislative bodies should request the executive heads of United Nations system organizations to develop comprehensive budget frameworks and resource allocation plans for their respective evaluation functions, based on the cost of maintaining an effective and sustainable evaluation function that adds value to the organization. The plans should be submitted for consideration to the legislative bodies within existing budgetary and reporting mechanisms and processes.	**Accepted and implemented** Funding for the UNICEF Evaluation Office is included in the UNICEF Integrated Budget 2014-2017, approved by the Executive Board in 2013. Expenditure under the Integrated Budget is reported annually to the Board. Costed evaluation plans are prepared to accompany new country programme documents. These plans are available for consideration by members of the Board. The revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF, approved by the Board in 2013, requires UNICEF to allocate 1 per cent of total programme expenditure to evaluation. Expenditure on evaluation is reported to the Board in the annual report on the evaluation function.
Recommendation 4 The legislative bodies should direct the executive heads of United Nations system organizations to review and revise, as necessary, existing policies for the appointment of the heads of evaluation offices, in order to enhance independence, integrity, ethics, credibility and inclusion, with due regard to the following criteria: • Term limits should be established for a single non-renewable term of office of between five and seven years, with no possibility for the incumbent of re-entry into the organization; • The head of evaluation should have qualifications and substantial experience in evaluation, complemented by experience in the related fields of strategic planning, basic and operational research and knowledge management, and should have excellent management and leadership attributes.	**Accepted and implemented** The revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF, approved by the Executive Board in 2013, requires that the head of the Evaluation Office have qualifications and experience of the kind indicated in the recommendation and that the head be appointed for a term of four years, renewable once, with no possibility of re-entry into the organization. The Board has called for a peer review of the evaluation function and it is expected that the policy will be revised in the light of the findings and recommendations of the peer review and other relevant assessments.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
2. Recommendations addressed to the executive head	
Recommendation 2 The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should adopt a balanced approach in addressing the purpose of evaluation for accountability, and for the development of a learning organization that has the appropriate incentive systems for innovation, risk-taking and the use of multidisciplinary perspectives.	**Accepted and implemented** This recommendation is addressed by the Evaluation Policy (2008) of UNICEF and the revised Policy (2013), which stress the importance of evaluation for both organizational learning and accountability and also suggest the accountability structure for our decentralized evaluation function.
Recommendation 5 The Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his capacity as chair of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), should request the United Nations Evaluation Group to collaborate in developing a robust and harmonized quality-assurance system for the evaluation function across the United Nations system.	**Accepted and in progress** UNICEF will promote and support the initiative through the CEB.
Recommendation 6 The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should make the use of evaluation an organizational priority based on a well-defined vision, strategy and results framework for the evaluation function, and report to their legislative bodies on the level, nature and impact of use of evaluation.	**Accepted and in progress** UNICEF already has an evaluation policy that provides details regarding the structure and accountabilities associated with our decentralized evaluation function. Annual plans at the country office, regional office and headquarters levels include the activities and priorities relating to the evaluation function, which include quality assurance and dissemination and use, and the management response to evaluations. In 2016, a corporate action plan will be developed in support of the 2013 evaluation policy. The annual report to the Executive Board on the evaluation function covers progress on the coverage, quality and use of evaluations.
Recommendation 7 The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should request evaluation offices to reassess the policies, strategies and priorities of the evaluation function. They should strategically position the evaluation function in their respective organizations so as to enhance its relevance in enabling the United Nations system to address current changes and challenges, and to achieve impact and sustainability.	**Accepted and ongoing** The evaluation function of UNICEF has undergone peer review twice and there will be an external peer review of the system in 2016. The review will serve as an evidence base for further strengthening the evaluation function. The scope of the peer review will include issues relating to resource allocation, impact and sustainability.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Recommendation 9 The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should develop the institutional framework and necessary support systems to enhance the quality and added value of decentralized evaluation and the role it could play in supporting the United Nations system to address emerging challenges, including those of the post-2015 development agenda, and to enhance coherence and alignments in evaluation within and across United Nations system organizations, and with national institutions.	**Accepted and implemented** The decentralized evaluation function of UNICEF already provides the institutional framework, and the external peer review (2016) will provide further evidence and guidance for the strengthening of the system. There is a continued push and effort to further enhance the system by improving capacity and resource allocations in light of emerging needs. UNICEF will also continue to work with and support global (EvalPartners), regional and national institutions in their efforts to boost the contribution of evaluation in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
Use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities in the United Nations system organizations — country case studies: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and India (JIU/REP/2014/8)	
1. Recommendations addressed to the Executive Board/legislative body	
Recommendation 2 The legislative/governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should systematically exercise their oversight functions on the use of non-staff personnel through regular reviews of non-staff personnel information/data provided by the respective executive heads.	**Accepted and implemented** The oversight of the use of consultants is generally performed by the operations and management function, which ensures the accurate application of policy. Performance indicators and other relevant data are monitored at various levels in the organization under the delegated authority of the Executive Director.
2. Recommendations addressed to the executive head	
Recommendation 1 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should revise their non-staff policies, including the definition of non-staff and the criteria for the use of non-staff personnel, by using the employment relationship principle in accordance with relevant labour recommendations of the International Labour Organization (ILO).	**Accepted and in progress** UNICEF supports this recommendation, which calls for a policy review of the use of non-staff personnel. However, we note that the application of international labour principles is a matter for legislative bodies and Member States to determine, not the executive head.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Recommendation 3 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should review the use of non-staff personnel with a view to identifying long-serving non-staff personnel under a de facto employment relationship and establish a plan (short- to medium-term) to terminate the inappropriate prolonged use of non-staff personnel. The plan, including resources required, should be presented to the legislative/governing bodies for endorsement and provision of the necessary financial support.	**Accepted and implemented** UNICEF supports this recommendation and has included mandatory breaks in service and limited the duration of consultants' contracts in its policy. Wherever funds are available, offices are encouraged to create positions, instead of consultancy contracts, and individual consultants and contractors are invited to compete in the process. At the same time, funding restrictions have to be taken into consideration, particularly since most non-staff contracts are funded by volatile project funds.
Recommendation 4 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should strengthen their internal monitoring, control and oversight of the use of non-staff personnel, through the sustained application of effective internal control mechanisms, systematic corporate monitoring and information/data collection, analysis and audits. They should ensure that a central department/unit at the corporate level is held responsible for global monitoring, analysis and reporting on the issue.	**Accepted and implemented** UNICEF supports this recommendation and has already implemented various corporate oversight systems on the global level, while noting that the actual contracting and management of consultants has been delegated to the heads of offices and division directors.
Recommendation 5 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure periodic analytical reporting both internally (to senior management) and externally (to the respective governing body) on the use of non-staff personnel in their organizations. Such reports should include detailed data and analysis on the use of non-staff, including the number of non-staff and associated expenditure, their weight in the total workforce, the breakdown of contractual modalities and the areas and locations used, the developing trends and the potential risks and corresponding measures.	**Accepted and implemented** UNICEF supports this recommendation, and this data is available in its enterprise resources planning system and is currently being transferred into the Virtual Integrated System of Information-One Enterprise Resource Planning (VISION) Manager's Dashboard.
Recommendation 6 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that updated and consolidated practical guidelines on the use of non-staff personnel are in place to guide managers involved in decision-making on the use of non-staff contractual modalities.	**Accepted and implemented** UNICEF supports this recommendation and has already developed practical guidelines.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Recommendation 7 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that individuals working for the organization under third-party/outsourcing contracts have decent working conditions, including a fair salary and social benefits and entitlements.	**Accepted and implemented** While UNICEF supports this recommendation in principle, the extent to which it can influence working conditions and its ability to influence salaries, social benefits and entitlements to third parties are limited, as contractors are required to comply with all local laws and regulations, which would include labour laws and minimum wage requirements.
Recommendation 8 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that the gender balance policy and related measures include non-staff personnel, including United Nations Volunteers (UNVs). Gender balance in non-staff personnel recruitment should be promoted and monitored as part of the overall gender equality policy.	**Accepted and implemented** UNICEF supports this recommendation and has already included it as a requirement in its non-staff policy. Gender and geographical representation should be implemented in the context of competitive bidding processes and the relevant procurement principles.
Recommendation 9 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should allow long-serving non-staff (including UNVs) to apply as internal candidates for vacant staff positions, with a view to ensuring fairness and providing a measure to reduce long-serving non-staff in the organizations.	**Under consideration** While UNICEF supports this recommendation in principle, it calls for a system-wide policy review. The High-level Committee on Management considered such a review at its meeting in Vienna in March 2016, and UNICEF will contribute fully to it.
Recommendation 10 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that there is a clear, fair and rational mechanism for the determination and adjustment of remuneration levels of non-staff personnel, particularly in respect of long-serving non-staff.	**Accepted and implemented** UNICEF sets consultants' fees on the basis of a competitive process for specific terms of reference on a case-by-case basis. Consequently, the outcome of the competitive process and the "best value for money" and market rate dictate the consultant fees. Therefore, a predetermined remuneration could limit and constrain the full and effective application of the competitive selection process, and standard remuneration packages may not yield the "best value for money". Also, assignments are normally based on case-specific terms of reference which, combined with the competitive bidding principles, may render the establishment of standard remuneration packages counterproductive.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Recommendation 11 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that long-serving non-staff personnel (including United Nations Volunteers (UNVs)) have access to appropriate formal internal justice mechanisms. To that end, the executive heads should consider allowing them access to existing mechanisms or establish another practical system for their use.	**Not accepted** On the basis of the decisions of the General Assembly (resolutions 61/261 and 67/265), the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations cannot allow non-staff to access the existing formal justice system without a decision to that effect by the Assembly. The Secretary-General has offered an alternative proposal to the Assembly, which has decided to remain seized of the matter, without having returned to it. In the interim, non-staff continue to be referred to arbitration. This recommendation should be addressed to the Assembly and not the executive heads of the United Nations organizations.
Recommendation 12 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations, as a matter of priority, should ensure and formalize the access of non-staff personnel (including UNVs) to mediation, the Ethics Office, the Office of the Ombudsman and other informal conflict-resolution mechanisms, and ensure that such personnel have recourse to the policies on the prevention of harassment and whistle-blowing. Furthermore, non-staff should be informed of those rights.	**Accepted and in progress** UNICEF supports this recommendation. It is already practiced widely by the Ethics Office and the Office of the Ombudsman, providing services to non-staff and reflected in important policies. However, a few additional policy amendments may be required to make this more explicit.
Contract management and administration in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2014/9)	
1. Recommendations addressed to the Executive Board/legislative body	
Recommendation 1 The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should direct the executive heads of their organizations to update and, when necessary, develop specific policies, procedures, guidance and follow-up systems to ensure effective and efficient management of post-award contract activities.	**Accepted and implemented** UNICEF has specific policies and procedures for post-award contract activities, including a contracts management module in the procurement e-learning course and specific AGORA self-training on this topic.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Recommendation 3 The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should direct the executive heads of their organizations to put in place a system whereby the persons designated to manage contracts after award are notified in writing about their accountability and responsibilities when managing a contract, and possess the required qualifications to manage the contract.	**Accepted and implemented** UNICEF is compliant with the recommendation as the contract management duties and responsibilities are built into the job description of staff responsible for any of these duties. While noting that recommendation 3 is directed at legislative bodies, and while agreeing with the need for contract managers to have the appropriate qualifications and to accept the responsibilities and accountabilities inherent in that role, UNICEF agrees with the general view of the organizations that implementing processes that generate notification in writing seem to be impracticable and administratively inefficient, especially in environments with a large procurement portfolio. Therefore, a cost-benefit analysis would be necessary to determine the value of implementing such a system.
2. Recommendations addressed to the executive heads	
Recommendation 2 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should incorporate in their annual statements of internal controls certifications, by individuals with procurement and contracts management authority that the execution of contracts has been in full compliance with the organization's policies, procedures and rules.	**Under consideration** UNICEF will examine the cost-effectiveness of this recommendation.
Recommendation 4 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should re-assess the financial and human-resource needs for post-award contract management in terms of current and projected contract volume, value, complexity and type and decide on the best support structures required (e.g., centralized or decentralized) to ensure best value for money and the achievement of the organization's objectives.	**Accepted and implemented** This recommendation has already been implemented through the approved centralization of service procurement by the New York headquarters of UNICEF.
Recommendation 5 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should develop a specific contract-management training programme in their organizations that would include courses offered as a requirement for all persons managing contracts of a certain size, value and complexity.	**Accepted and implemented** UNICEF has a contracts management module in the procurement e-learning course and specific AGORA self-training on this topic.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Recommendation 6 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that supervisors of persons managing contracts incorporate contract-management criteria in these persons' annual performance evaluations.	**Accepted and implemented** With the rollout of the new UNICEF performance management system (Achieve), supervisors will evaluate their staff on activities specifically relating to the office/divisional work plan deliverables. In this context, their efforts to effectively manage vendor relationships and contracts will be assessed.
Recommendation 7 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that for contracts of a certain value and complexity risk-management plans are in place covering post-award contract activities. These plans should include risk-mitigation measures and also clear designation of responsibility to those persons executing such measures.	**Accepted and implemented** UNICEF Contracts Review Committee submissions highlight contract management risks, depending on the value, risk and complexity of contract award recommendations, and also include mitigation plans and responsibilities.
Recommendation 8 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that a system exists in their organizations for documenting and reporting on a contractor's performance in meeting contract requirements, and assign responsibility and management accountability for completeness of the contractor's performance reporting.	**Accepted and implemented** The UNICEF Supply Division has implemented the recommendation for goods procurement and services contracting, in accordance with chapter 6, section 7, of the UNICEF Supply Manual.
Recommendation 9 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should conduct a study in their organizations to analyse the causes of modifications in contracts above certain thresholds and identify systemic deficiencies contributing to cost increases and delays. Remedial action should follow to address such deficiencies.	**Accepted and in progress** A request has been submitted to the VISION Coordination Group in the Supply Division for VISION enhancements to enable the analysis of contract amendment times.
Recommendation 10 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should ensure that, when applicable, appropriate levels of liquidated damages and other remedies are included in the standard clauses of contracts and are judiciously enforced to protect the interests and rights of their organizations.	**Accepted and implemented** The liquidated damages clauses are part of the standard contractual provisions of UNICEF.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Recommendation 11	**Accepted and implemented**
The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should augment the capabilities of their existing information technology systems such as Enterprise Resource Planning systems, or consider other specialized contract-management systems, to support the management of post-award contract activities based on a cost/benefit analysis and taking into account the level of need for such functionality.	This is being considered in connection with other system- related enhancements (VISION).

Evaluation of mainstreaming of full and productive employment and decent work by the United Nations system organizations: summary report (JIU/REP/2015/1)

1. Recommendations addressed to the Executive Board/legislative body

None.

2. Recommendations addressed to the executive heads

Recommendation 6	**Accepted and in progress**
Executive heads of United Nations system organizations should instruct their respective technical units to re-examine their work to identify if there are areas where the decent work agenda can be linked to their activities and to make existing linkages more explicit. Such organizations may wish to cooperate with ILO for support in this process.	UNICEF has already mainstreamed the decent work agenda in the work of the organization within its mandate, particularly in the area of social protection as a key pillar. We work closely with ILO and others through such mechanisms as the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board on a division of labour that is complementary.

Recommendations to the General Assembly of the United Nations for the determination of parameters for a comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States (JIU/REP/2015/2)

No recommendations addressed to UNICEF

Cooperation among the United Nations regional commissions (JIU/REP/2015/3)

No recommendations addressed to UNICEF

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Public information and communications policies and practices in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2015/4)	
1. Recommendations addressed to the Executive Board/legislative body	
Recommendation 1 The legislative/governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should request the executive heads to embrace the nine benchmarks proposed in the present report, in order to enhance the strategic role of the public information and communications function in contributing to the achievement of organizational goals and priorities, thereby promoting global support for their organization.	**Accepted and in progress** Many of the benchmarks are already reflected in the new Global Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy, adopted by the UNICEF in 2014, notably in such areas as the commitment to embedding communications and public advocacy within strategic priorities, coherent messaging and multilingualism. UNICEF has undertaken a midterm review of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, which will provide a further opportunity to strengthen the position of communications and public advocacy within the overarching strategic direction of the organization.
2. Recommendations addressed to the executive heads	
Recommendation 2 Starting from the forthcoming programme and budget cycle, the executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should reinforce in a sustainable manner the strategic role of the public information and communication function within their organization, by adhering to the nine benchmarks proposed in the present report, as applicable.	**Accepted and in progress** The nine benchmarks will be valuable in informing efforts to measure the implementation of the current UNICEF Global Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy, and will help to inform discussions and outcomes from the ongoing midterm review of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017.
Recommendation 3 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should encourage, as applicable, their representatives in the United Nations Communications Group (UNCG) at principals' level, and in the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Communications and Advocacy Working Group, to coordinate their work closely and to develop strong complementarities and synergies between the two groups in order to further strengthen public information and communication capacity in the United Nations system.	**Accepted and implemented** UNICEF has demonstrated its commitment to the UNCG system on several levels, including by co-convening UNCG and providing a senior-level adviser to support the implementation of the UNCG Working Group workplan, working closely with the Development Operations Coordination Office and UNCG.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Recommendation 4 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should take concrete measures to strengthen public information and communications capacity at the field level within their organizations, when applicable. This in turn, would enable local UNCGs to conduct joint activities with due attention to local circumstances and organizations' mandated priorities and reinforce the effectiveness and impact of those activities.	**Accepted and implemented** UNICEF agrees in principle, but notes that implementation will rely on clear commitments to provide sufficient levels of funding for communications, public information and public advocacy across the organization to meet expected outcomes. UNICEF will use the opportunity of the midterm review of its Strategic Plan to assess various options for resourcing communications and public advocacy.
Recommendation 5 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should develop an effective social media strategy that is based on updated guidelines and is properly aligned with the other respective policies and frameworks/strategies for public information and communications.	**Accepted and implemented** UNICEF agrees with this recommendation. As part of its new Global Communication and Public Advocacy Strategy, the organization has developed new digital guidance and approaches and has launched a major digital transformation exercise that will maximize the opportunities provided, especially by social media, for public engagement and action. The organization has also recently developed a response to an audit of its web platforms and procedures, which will also greatly enhance its approach to the appropriate and effective management of social media.
Recommendation 6 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should strengthen the in-house capacity for social media management, with a view to creating specific content and maintaining organizational accounts, as well as to providing advice on the proper use of social media.	**Accepted and implemented** UNICEF has embarked on strengthening and enhancing its guidance and support to colleagues in the use or management of social media channels.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Review of activities and resources devoted to address climate change in the United Nations system organizations (JIU/REP/2015/5)	
1. Recommendations addressed to the Executive Board/legislative body	
Recommendation 2 The governing bodies of the United Nations system organizations should support and endorse the participation of their respective organizations involved in cross-cutting areas directly or indirectly related to climate change in a system-wide United Nations strategy to combat climate change, in a manner consistent with the outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (COP21).	**Accepted and in progress** As highlighted by the Executive Director in his recent speech to the Executive Board, UNICEF will be strengthening its engagement on climate change. Supporting the outcome of COP21 and Governments in upholding their commitments under the Paris Agreement is part of the work to be done under the Framework.
2. Recommendations addressed to the executive heads	
Recommendation 1 The executive heads of United Nations system organizations should present to the governing bodies of their organizations a long-term United Nations system-wide climate change strategy responsive to the outcome of the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and request its endorsement and the support necessary for its effective implementation, in order to achieve measurable interim results by 2020.	**Under consideration** As part of the High-level Committee on Programmes Working Group on Climate Change, UNICEF has contributed to the draft common-core principles for a United Nations system-wide approach to climate change action, to be presented for approval at the thirty-first meeting of the Committee, and to a discussion paper on the suggested priorities for coordinated United Nations system action on climate change, intended to stimulate discussion within the Committee on the possible way forward towards a comprehensive system-wide strategy.
Recommendation 3 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations involved in areas with clear cross-linkages with climate change should elaborate and agree upon a common methodology to establish criteria to ensure the traceability of specific funding for climate change adaptation and mitigation, seeking consistency and coherence in the context of the climate change regime methodologies.	**Accepted and in progress** The discussion paper on suggested priorities for coordinated United Nations system action on climate change, to be discussed at the next meeting of the High-level Committee on Programmes, includes a recommendation to develop and enhance integrated/blended finance and related accountability through a clear monitoring system. If approved, this would be a step in the direction of a common methodology.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Recommendation 4 Executive heads of the member organizations of the Chief Executives Board, under the leadership of the Secretary-General in his capacity as Chair of the Board, should promote the development of a common information-sharing system for the measurement and monitoring of the United Nations system activities and resources aimed at addressing climate change, by sector and type of funding, so as to ensure the most cost-efficient and effective delivery of activities to tackle climate change.	**Accepted and in progress** The discussion paper on suggested priorities for coordinated United Nations system action on climate change, to be discussed at the next meeting of the High-level Committee on Programmes, includes the following priorities: • Develop integrated approaches to measuring the impacts of climate change and of climate action • Collaborate on the integrated and accountable use of climate finance If approved, this would be the first step in this regard.
Recommendation 6 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations involved in country activities in the UNDAF, should ensure that their organizations follow the UNDG guidance on integrating climate change in the UNDAF and build on existing good practices of engagement with the relevant UNFCCC bodies, for climate change assistance at the country and regional level, in close cooperation with the resident coordinators, to enhance and strengthen capacity-building assistance to developing countries through CCAs/UNDAFs.	**Accepted and in progress** UNICEF, through the UNDAF process, will continue to strengthen its involvement in this regard.

Review of the organizational ombudsman services across the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2015/6)

1. Recommendations addressed to the Executive Board/legislative body

Recommendation 5 The legislative bodies of the United Nations system organizations should make it possible for the ombudsman to report to them on systemic issues identified on a regular basis.	**Under consideration** UNICEF is committed to using the informal resolution of conflicts to the fullest extent possible to avoid the resort to litigation and its costs and to promote a culture of dialogue in the organization. It supports this recommendation.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
2. Recommendations addressed to the executive heads	
Recommendation 1 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations, in consultation with staff representatives and the existing Ombudsmen, should review, update and disseminate across their respective organizations the terms of reference of the ombudsman, giving due consideration to the direction provided by the present report and using a staff-management consultation mechanism.	**Accepted and in progress** Efforts to finalize the terms of reference of the ombudsman are currently being led by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General in consultation with the United Nations Ombudsman, the ombudsmen for the funds and programmes and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, respectively, as well as with management and staff.
Recommendation 2 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations, in cooperation with the ombudsman offices, should include questions relating to the ombudsman service in staff surveys and responses should be used by management, staff associations and the ombudsman office to increase staff awareness and promote a better understanding of the ombudsman function in the organization.	**Accepted and not started** UNICEF will implement this recommendation in its next Global Staff Survey.
Recommendation 3 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should request their respective ombudsmen to ensure that their field staff have the option of an in-person consultation with the ombudsman of another United Nations system organization in the same location (for example, the regional ombudsman of the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services or the visiting ombudsman of another United Nations system organization).	**Accepted and in progress** The terms of references provide for the regional ombudsmen to consult and liaise with the ombudsmen for the funds and programmes in relation to a case from a staff member of the funds and programmes. Current practice requires the regional ombudsman to provide urgent assistance, if required, and then refer the matter to the ombudsmen of the funds and programmes.
Recommendation 4 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should request their ombudsman offices to include in their work programme the development of a case management manual and to seek the cooperation of other United Nations system ombudsmen with a view to achieving a certain level of harmonization across the system.	**Accepted and in progress** The Office of the Ombudsman for the United Nations Funds and Programmes already has a draft case management manual under development. Consultations will be undertaken internally to ensure harmonization and consistency within the United Nations common system.
Recommendation 6 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should request the ombudsman to include continuous training and certification of ombudsman practitioners in the strategic workplans of their ombudsman offices.	**Accepted and implemented** This is standard practice in the Office of the Ombudsman for the United Nations Funds and Programmes and is being done in respect of the two newly appointed ombudsmen, as well.

Relevant recommendations	*Remarks*
Recommendation 7 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should establish an accountability and appraisal system for the ombudsman services and include the relevant provisions in the ombudsman's terms of reference. The system and the provisions should reflect the specific requirements of the ombudsman function by making accountability and the appraisal process inclusive and participatory for all stakeholders.	**Accepted and in progress** The challenge is to identify a system that does not undermine or appear to undermine the independence and objectivity of the ombudsmen.
Recommendation 8 The executive heads of the United Nations system organizations should request their ombudsmen to discuss the findings and recommendations of the present review at the meeting of the United Nations and Related International Organizations to be held in 2016 and to decide on the course of actions they intend to reflect in their programmes of work, either individually or collectively.	**Accepted and not started** Acceptance reported by the ombudsmen.

United Nations E/ICEF/2016/9

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 April 2016

Original: English

For information

United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
Annual session 2016
14-17 June 2016
Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

Annual report on the implementation of the Gender Action Plan

Summary

The present document, prepared in accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/8, provides the second annual update on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan (GAP), 2014-2017. The report includes an update on progress on GAP priorities, indicators and performance benchmarks.

* E/ICEF/2016/5.

16-06231 (E) 090516

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. The year 2015 was an important and invigorating period for the work of UNICEF on gender equality. The newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals place gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls front and centre, reflecting and reaffirming UNICEF gender priorities: a focus on adolescent girls and on multisectoral investments in health, education, water and sanitation, nutrition, HIV and AIDS, and child and social protection to advance the rights of women and girls. Gender-equitable targets that are core to the UNICEF mandate have been included in Goal 5 (gender equality), where ending violence against women and girls, and ending harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) are featured prominently. They are also featured in several other goals, including Goal 3 (health), which incorporates a focus on maternal mortality, sexual and reproductive health and HIV and AIDS; Goal 4 (education), which targets elimination of gender disparities at secondary and higher levels, and in quality of education and skills; and Goal 6 (water and sanitation), which targets sanitation and hygiene, with specific mention of the needs of women and girls.

2. There is much to celebrate in the progress made on gender equality over the past 15 years. Globally, the annual number of maternal deaths decreased from approximately 532,000 in 1990 to an estimated 303,000 in 2015. Remarkably, 62 per cent of pregnant women living with HIV are now benefiting from lifelong antiretroviral treatment compared with only 11 per cent five years ago, and mother-to-child-transmission of HIV has been reduced almost by half since 2008. Between 1999 and 2012, the number of girls enrolled in primary school has risen from 92 to 97 for every 100 boys, and in secondary school from 91 to 97; and the number of countries that have achieved gender parity in both primary and secondary school enrolment has increased from 32 to a projected 62 in 2015. After stagnating for many years, child marriage rates have begun to decline, going from 30 per cent in 2005 to 26 per cent in 2014.

3. In many other areas, however, it is clear that gender-equitable results will require renewed and accelerated efforts. For UNICEF, a key concern is adolescence, when gender inequalities become especially pronounced. Globally, more than a quarter of girls are still being married before they turn 18, and one fifth of girls are still becoming mothers before they reach that age. Adolescent deaths due to AIDS have tripled since 2000, and more than 60 per cent of new HIV infections among 15- to-19-year-olds are among adolescent girls. In 2012, at least 36 countries had fewer than 90 girls for every 100 boys in lower secondary school. With current trends in sub-Saharan Africa, completion of lower secondary school will be achieved only in the year 2111 for the poorest girls, compared with 2090 for the poorest boys. In conflict situations, girls are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school than boys. Gender-based violence (GBV) is endemic, not only in public settings but also in family and intimate partner relationships, and especially in emergency and humanitarian settings. And as disaster, risk and conflict situations multiply, the basic needs of women and girls, and their critical role in crisis management and resolution, are still not fully acknowledged.

4. Within this context, implementation of the GAP by UNICEF has proceeded full force, and important programmatic and institutional advances have been made. Programmatic results have progressed significantly, especially on the targeted

gender priorities and also in several areas of gender mainstreaming. UNICEF engagement has helped to incorporate targets and indicators in the Sustainable Development Goals, and to propel national policy frameworks and local action on child marriage, girls' secondary education and adolescent health. A growing number of countries have national plans and initiatives focusing on adolescent girls: 84 countries were supported to allocate budgets to reduce adolescent pregnancy; 49 countries are targeting anaemia among adolescent girls; 30 countries have action plans to end child marriage. Although these are only the first steps towards widespread, large-scale programming to advance the rights of adolescent girls, they represent movement in the right direction. Similarly, although more needs to be done in the area of gender mainstreaming, attention to gender drivers and results is increasingly evident in programmatic areas such as the importance of maternity benefits for breastfeeding, the role of gender-sensitive messaging in reaching children with the polio vaccine, and the use of dignity kits and gender-friendly water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in emergencies.

5. UNICEF has more gender experts at headquarters, regional and country offices to support strong programming, and internal capacity-building efforts continue across the organization. Gender parity in senior-level staffing has shown a consistently positive trend over the past two years. A higher proportion of country programme management plans (CPMPs) are incorporating gender results and gender expenditures are tracking a positive trend, although the pace on both must now be accelerated. Gender priorities are beginning to be embedded in human resources, programme planning results monitoring and other systems that are core to UNICEF functioning, an effort that will require continued diligence and resolve in order to "automate" gender in the organization over the longer term.

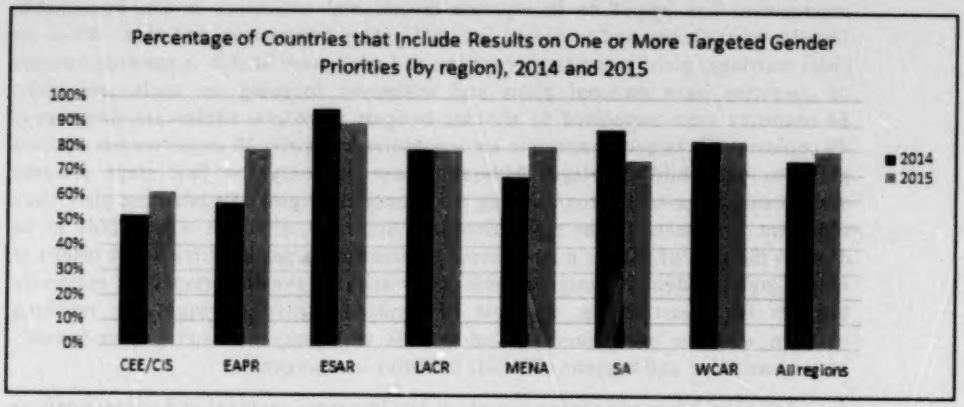
II. Programmatic results

6. The GAP specifies four cross-sectoral targeted priorities that focus on addressing the challenges and disadvantages adolescent girls face as they transition from childhood to adulthood. They include (a) promoting gender-responsive adolescent health; (b) advancing girls' secondary education; (c) ending child marriage; and (d) addressing GBV in emergencies. In addition, the GAP aims to achieve gender-mainstreaming results that are specific to the seven outcome areas of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017.

A. Targeted gender priorities

7. In 2015, 79 per cent of UNICEF-supported country programmes included results on one or more targeted gender priorities, a 4 per cent increase from 2014 (see figure 1). Five out of the seven regions met or exceeded the global average, and in no region was the proportion less than 60 per cent, a 10 per cent increase from the lowest percentage in 2014.

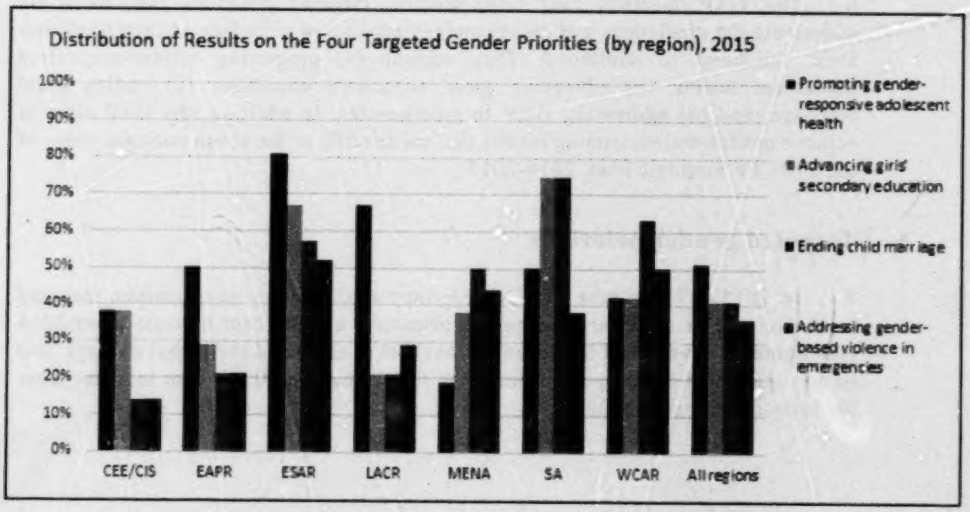
Figure 1



Key: CEE/CIS: Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region; EAPR: East Asia and Pacific region; ESAR: Eastern and Southern Africa region; LACR: Latin America and Caribbean region; MENA: Middle East and North Africa region; SA: South Asia region; WCAR: West and Central Africa region.

8. The targeted priorities adopted by country offices reflect the local contexts of women and adolescent girls in each region (see figure 2). Gender-responsive adolescent health is a priority in the Eastern and Southern Africa region (ESAR) and the Latin America and Caribbean region (LACR). Girls' secondary education is a high priority in most regions — especially in ESAR and South Asia (SA). Child marriage and GBV in emergencies are major concerns in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA), West and Central Africa region (WCAR), ESAR and SA.

Figure 2



1. Ending child marriage

9. Globally, child marriage rates have been declining, but large numbers of girls remain affected: an estimated 280 million girls are at risk of becoming child brides. The year 2015 was a watershed, however, as UNICEF, together with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and other partners successfully supported the inclusion in Sustainable Development Goal 5 of target 5.3 on ending child marriage. UNICEF also provided leadership and technical support in the definition of a strong indicator to measure progress, which has consistently earned an "excellent" rating from the United Nations Statistics Division.

10. To translate this commitment into action on the ground, UNICEF collaborated with UNFPA and several government partners to develop the joint Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage. The programme, which focuses on 12 priority countries in the Middle East, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, aims to reach 2.5 million girls who are at risk of child marriage or are already in union. It is supported by funding of almost $95 million from the Governments of Canada, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and from the European Union.

11. The inception phase of the programme was completed in 2015, with foundational systems and processes strengthened in all 12 countries, programmatic activities accelerated and the momentum and learning conveyed to a broader range of countries. National action plans on child marriage have been developed in five global programme countries; three of these plans — in Burkina Faso, Mozambique and Uganda — have been costed. Beyond the global programme, two additional countries have costed national action plans.

Output indicator	*2013*	*2015*	*Target (2017)*
Number of countries with costed national strategies or plans on child marriage from countries with prevalence of 25% or more	1	5	12

12. In 2015, 52 UNICEF-supported country programmes focused on child marriage as a targeted gender priority, compared to 44 in 2014. In Africa, significant gains were made in strengthening and implementing commitments made by national Governments and by the African Union to address child marriage. In Ghana, UNICEF supported the establishment of a Child Marriage Unit under the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, while in Mozambique, the organization advocated for the approval, by the Council of Ministers, of the National Strategy to Prevent and Eliminate Child Marriage (2015-2019). With support from UNICEF, Uganda launched the National Strategy on Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy in June 2015. The strategy has since been rolled out in 37 districts by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. Child marriage and adolescent health-related indicators have been included in the Education Management Information System. In Ethiopia, UNICEF engaged with the Government and other stakeholders to secure a national commitment to formalize a Road Map to End Child Marriage and to increase government spending by 10 per cent for its operationalization.

13. With UNICEF support, Zambia hosted the first African Girls' Summit on Ending Child Marriage in Africa, which was convened by the African Union. The

summit was a key milestone in the African Union Campaign to End Child Marriage in Africa, bringing together more than 1,000 government and civil society partners from more than 30 member countries to affirm and strengthen the region's commitment to ending the practice. In support of the campaign and the summit, UNICEF released the statistical report *A Profile of Child Marriage in Africa* which, for the first time ever, provides trends and projections of child marriage in Africa. The report highlights the demographic trends that require urgent action by African countries to address child marriage if they are to make progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

14. In Asia, UNICEF has focused on partnering with the Governments of high-prevalence and high-burden countries to forge convergence among the many existing platforms and initiatives and to further strengthen systemic capacity to operationalize them at scale. In India, UNICEF worked in 8 states and 14 districts to reach 262,000 adolescent girls and boys with life skills training, specifically focusing on information and negotiating ability related to avoiding child marriage, early pregnancy and GBV. An estimated 260,000 parents were also reached with similar information. Building on this experience, UNICEF is developing scalable models for girls' empowerment and child marriage prevention at the district level, including the provision of an adolescent empowerment toolkit for delivery by government service providers and community organizations engaged in initiatives such as the national adolescent health programme (Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram) and schemes such as "Save a Daughter, Educate a Daughter" (Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao).

15. In partnership with UNICEF, Radio Mozambique launched the first national entertainment-education radio drama entitled *Ouro Negro*, with key messages on child marriage in local languages reaching more than 1.2 million people. In Niger in 2015, UNICEF continued to partner with the national radio station, La Voix du Sahel, which produced a new musical series on girls' rights, *Haske Magani Duku*. The station covers an estimated 85 per cent of the country's population. In Ethiopia, trained community leaders provided messaging and information on legal rights, reaching 500,000 community members — including 300,000 adolescent girls — in three regions.

16. The global programme aims to serve as a catalyst to further refine, at scale, models for child marriage prevention and mitigation, to leverage and mobilize national financing for such models, and to embed strong monitoring and tracking on key indicators in national measurement systems.

2. Advancing girls' secondary education

17. Progress towards gender parity in secondary education is one of the biggest education success stories. However, the poorest girls remain out of school and, where gender disparity in schooling is most severe, it is girls that are disadvantaged. In 2012, 36 countries had fewer than 90 girls for every 100 boys in secondary education, the majority in the Arab States and sub-Saharan Africa.

18. Education 2030: Incheon Declaration, the framework for implementing Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education, recognizes the importance of gender equality in achieving the right to education for all. The declaration, adopted at the World Education Forum in May 2015, identifies commitments through supporting gender-sensitive policies, planning and learning environments; mainstreaming

gender issues in teacher training and curricula; and eliminating gender-based discrimination and violence in schools. UNICEF and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) made substantial contributions to shaping the gender-related targets and indicators on equitable education in the Sustainable Development Goal framework.

19. In 2015, a total of 53 UNICEF country programmes prioritized advancing girls' secondary education, focusing on advancing quality learning and curricula, alternative learning and transition to formal schooling, and mentorship and teacher training. In Kenya, Nigeria and the United Republic of Tanzania, girls' clubs and female mentors were used to increase girls' enrolment. In the United Republic of Tanzania, UNICEF expanded its reach to a total of 420 schools. In northern Nigeria, increasing women's participation in leadership positions in the education system contributed to a 50 per cent increase in the number of female head teachers in secondary schools, which provided girls with positive female role models.

20. In Afghanistan, the retention of adolescent girls in schools has been facilitated by improved safety and security through the construction or rehabilitation in 200 schools of separate latrines for boys, girls and teachers, water points and boundary walls. In Bangladesh, UNICEF provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Education to integrate life skills-based education into the national curriculum. Along with teacher training, this has benefited 8 million secondary school students, 40 per cent of whom are girls. About 30,000 primary and 27,500 secondary schoolteachers were mobilized to engage with students to advocate against child marriage.

21. Early pregnancy can result in adolescent girls dropping out of school. In Mexico, UNICEF, in partnership with UNFPA, provided technical assistance for the development of a National Strategy to Prevent Adolescent Pregnancy. In Sierra Leone, with UNICEF support, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology set up 330 learning centres countrywide, which have enrolled more than 14,000 pregnant and lactating adolescent girls.

22. UNICEF continues to build national capacities to design and implement programmes that address GBV in and around schools, including through the development of national policies and standards and the establishment of community-protection mechanisms. In the United Republic of Tanzania, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education to implement in-school measures that allow girls to report sexual advances and abuse and to create safe spaces for counselling. In Mali, UNICEF supported the establishment of referral and prevention mechanisms in 104 schools to better detect and respond to GBV. The UNICEF co-led Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector emphasizes school safety, including advocating with Governments to identify ways of making schools and girls' transportation to schools safe.

Output indicator	*2015*	*Target (2017)*
Proportion of countries with education sector policies or plans that specify prevention and response mechanisms to address school-related gender-based violence	22%	32%

23. Addressing the disadvantages faced by girls and women in the education system has been an important element in the 14 countries where UNICEF works to strengthen social cohesion, human security and resilience under the Peace Building, Education and Advocacy Programme. In Ethiopia and Pakistan, strategies included revising the curricula to remove gender stereotypes and negative connotations of women from learning materials. Codes of Conduct to address GBV were introduced in Ethiopia and Liberia, and in South Sudan, girls were supplied with materials, infrastructure and financial support — including learning supplies, menstrual hygiene kits, sanitary facilities and cash transfers — to increase their school attendance. Supporting school attendance, learning and safety of girls in the large number of humanitarian situations is an important priority for the organization.

3. Promoting gender-responsive adolescent health

24. In 2015, a total of 65 UNICEF programme countries prioritized gender-responsive adolescent health. The GAP provides an appropriate framework for addressing cross-sectoral gender-responsive adolescent health issues, including adolescent pregnancy and anaemia, prevention of HIV and AIDS, menstrual hygiene management (MHM) and FGM/C. In 2015, this framework shaped UNICEF activity and support for the inclusion of targets on adolescent health under the Sustainable Development Goals on health (maternal and reproductive health, and HIV and AIDS), water and sanitation (sanitation and hygiene, including MHM for women and girls), and gender equality (FGM/C as a harmful practice).

25. This engagement was in conjunction with the active role of UNICEF in other global and national efforts to advance adolescent health, including leadership on the development of the Operational Framework for the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescent Health. UNICEF also played a role in the accelerated attention to HIV and AIDS prevention among adolescents — particularly girls — and, in collaboration with UNAIDS and other partners, co-led the global launch of All In to #EndAdolescentAIDS.

26. The UNICEF Health Strategy (2015-2030) incorporates a specific focus on improving services for adolescent girls who are pregnant or have already delivered one or more children. This is in conjunction with reducing adolescent pregnancy rates and associated risks, which remains an important priority. The strategy also focuses on HIV and AIDS prevention and care among adolescents and continued leveraging of the human papilloma virus (HPV) vaccine in order to deliver an integrated package of services to adolescents. The prevention of child marriage and increased school retention of adolescent girls are prioritized as key linkages.

27. UNICEF supported several countries in advancing their national policy frameworks on gender-responsive adolescent health. Eighty-four countries now have costed plans to reduce adolescent pregnancy, approaching the target of 93 by 2017. In Mauritania, UNICEF facilitated the integration of adolescent health in the National Reproductive Health Strategy, 2016-2020. In Bangladesh, Kenya and Rwanda, UNICEF supported the development of national adolescent (and reproductive) health strategies. In Kenya, this included the testing of Health Management Information System tools with disaggregated data for adolescents, while in Bangladesh, it included an explicit focus on teenage pregnancy. In Rwanda, the strategy was developed in consultation with young people; it encompasses a

focus not only on HIV prevention and reproductive health, but also on school retention and prevention of GBV.

28. In Latin America, UNICEF supported countries in the development of programmes on pregnancy prevention, gender, sexual and reproductive rights and support for adolescent mothers. In Costa Rica, programmes to educate adolescent mothers and to prevent pregnancy were undertaken in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, gender-sensitive services were provided to adolescents in more than 35 health centres nationwide.

29. In India, UNICEF worked to reduce anaemia in adolescent girls by helping the Government to scale up the Weekly Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation Programme in all states. UNICEF supported the institutionalization of a real-time monitoring system in the State of Uttar Pradesh, which has the largest micronutrient programme in the country, serving 49 million adolescent girls and boys. In other countries, there has also been a rapid increase in policies or plans targeting anaemia reduction among girls, rising from 27 countries in 2013 to 49 countries in 2015.

Output indicator	*2013*	*2015*	*Target (2017)*
Number of countries with costed plans to reduce adolescent pregnancy	83	84	93
Number of countries with policies or plans targeting anaemia reduction among girls	27	49	50

30. The number of countries with proven high-impact, evidence-based interventions to address HIV among adolescents in their national strategies increased from 26 in 2014 to 31 in 2015. UNICEF supported 19 countries[1] in convening a broad range of stakeholders to contribute to country-level assessments to strengthen their national programme response to HIV among adolescents.

Output indicator	*2014*	*2015*	*Target (2017)*
Number of countries with national HIV/AIDS strategies that include proven high-impact evidence-based interventions to address HIV among adolescents	26	31	38

31. Guided by new data on the impact of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) on averting new HIV infections, UNICEF led a global consultation in 2015 to consider the clinical, ethical and operational issues associated with administering oral PrEP. This was followed by funding from UNITAID for a five-year, $45 million demonstration project in Brazil, South Africa and Thailand to inform the feasibility and acceptability of delivering PrEP antiretroviral medicines for sexually active, high-risk adolescents aged 15 to 19 years, especially girls.

[1] Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Haiti, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, the Philippines, Rwanda, Swaziland, Thailand, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.

32. UNICEF programming on girl-friendly school bathrooms with provisions for MHM helps to meet girls' needs for dignity, privacy, safety and health while at school. In three states in India, an estimated 394,000 adolescent girls and their parents from disadvantaged communities, as well as frontline workers, were reached to address gender norms and misconceptions related to menstrual hygiene. In Kenya, 127 schools in 14 counties were supported with an MHM programme and provision of gender-sensitive training and latrines, bathrooms and sanitary towels.

Output Indicator	*2013*	*2015*	*Target (2017)*
Number of countries that included menstrual hygiene management targets in WASH in School strategies and operational plans	22	29	48

33. Within the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting, efforts resulted in more than 2,000 communities, covering 5 million people across 14 countries, declaring abandonment of FGM/C in 2015. The programme focuses on 16 countries in Africa as well as Yemen. Programmatic evidence indicates that in those communities that have collectively committed to abandon FGM/C, some 70 per cent of girls remain intact.

34. Community dialogue focusing on prevention is being supplemented with services that include care for girls and women who have undergone the practice. In Egypt, more than 42,000 girls received at least one health service related to FGM/C. In Sudan, 26,000 new mothers were provided with face-to-face counselling on the benefits of not having their daughters undergo FGM/C.

35. It remains a priority for UNICEF to strengthen health-system delivery for adolescents, particularly girls. Also important is better integration of services that serve the multiple needs of adolescent girls (and boys) for information, support and services through single platforms as they face the challenges of pregnancy prevention, HIV and AIDS and the risk of sexually transmitted infections, nutritional deprivation, transition to puberty and MHM, and harmful practices such as FGM/C.

4. Addressing gender-based violence in emergencies

36. Given the increase in the number of humanitarian situations that UNICEF responded to in 2015, the proportion of country offices focusing on GBV in emergencies also increased, to 46 in 2015 from 41 in 2014. The scale and visibility of new and major humanitarian crises, such as the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and the migrant and refugee crisis in Europe, is also bringing unprecedented attention to GBV in emergencies as a widespread, life-threatening violation that requires a much more robust response. UNICEF contributed to substantial gains in the field of GBV in emergencies through contributions to the Call to Action Roadmap (2015-2020) launched by 15 countries and 25 civil society organizations in October 2015. UNICEF also played a key role in incorporating GBV in emergencies into multiple Sustainable Development Goal targets, particularly those related to Goals 5, 8 and 16.

37. UNICEF, together with UNFPA, launched and disseminated the revised Inter-Agency Standing Committee "Guidelines for Integrating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action", and facilitated implementation through

multisectoral delivery of services and support to almost 2 million women and children in a range of emergency settings; more than four times the number served in 2014.

Output indicator	*2013*	*2015*
Proportion of countries in humanitarian action with a child protection subcluster coordination mechanism that meets Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action standards for coordination.	74%	76%
UNICEF-targeted children and women in humanitarian situations who experienced or were at risk of experiencing sexual violence and received at least one kind of multisectoral support service (health, psychosocial, legal, safe space, dignity kit, etc.)	432 757	1 958 663

38. In Myanmar, UNICEF worked with the child protection and GBV subclusters to train 950 WASH staff across camps in Rakhine State, installing solar lighting in sanitation areas and partitioning water and sanitation facilities by sex, thus facilitating use by women and girls. In the Central African Republic, almost 72,000 women and 36,000 girls were provided access to safe sanitation facilities, and in Nepal, more than 640,000 women and girls were provided access to safe water and sanitation services. To promote dignity, mobility, protection and hygiene, UNICEF supported 21,500 girls and women of reproductive age with access to dignity kits in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and South Sudan. In Malawi, understanding the acute risk between access to food and GBV-related risks, UNICEF provided food distributors and cash monitors with training on prevention of GBV, sexual exploitation and abuse.

39. Under the Communities Care: Transforming Lives and Preventing Violence programme, UNICEF trained 542 service providers, engaged 42,918 people in community action events and reached 17,096 people via radio to promote awareness of GBV in Somalia and South Sudan. In the wake of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, UNICEF made efforts to reduce the risk of GBV, including the establishment of 3,445 women's groups in 14 earthquake-affected districts. An additional 325,874 people were reached with information about preventing and addressing GBV.

40. In South Sudan, UNICEF worked in 20 counties across 6 states to reach 85,257 children and women with services related to sexual violence in humanitarian contexts, including case management, clinical management of rape, referrals, access to women's centres, awareness-raising efforts, community dialogue and information sessions in health clinics. In the State of Palestine, family centres provided 27,262 children (13,710 girls and 13,552 boys) and 44,228 caregivers (32,464 females and 11,764 males) with services related to children's needs and conducted awareness-raising sessions on issues such as child marriage, sexual harassment and sexual violence against girls, and boys' engagement in community violence.

41. In 2015, UNICEF recognized that the burgeoning number of migrants and refugees entering Europe meant that much more needed to be done to address GBV in that context. In Croatia, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, UNICEF and partners provided safe spaces for 57,515 children at risk of sexual exploitation, abuse and trafficking. UNICEF is also increasingly incorporating GBV prevention and response in disaster-risk-reduction assessments. For example, in Ethiopia, UNICEF and UNFPA supported the inclusion of GBV in the rapid

assessment efforts to respond to the large-scale drought that is expected to affect 10.2 million people.

B. Gender mainstreaming

42. Seventy-seven per cent of UNICEF-supported country programmes included one or more gender-mainstreaming results across the seven Strategic Plan outcome areas (see figure 3). There is annual variation in the distribution of mainstreaming results across sectors, although education and child protection continue to have the largest percentage of mainstreaming results (see figure 4).

Figure 3

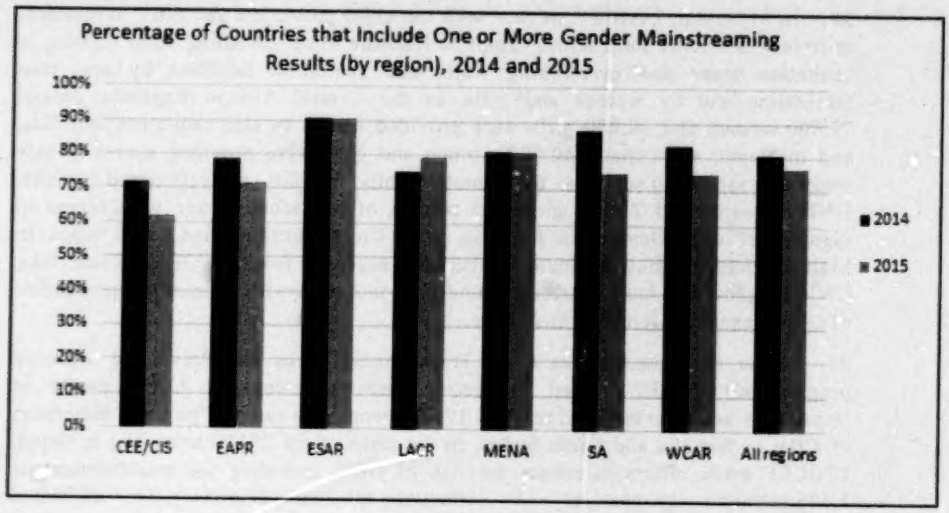
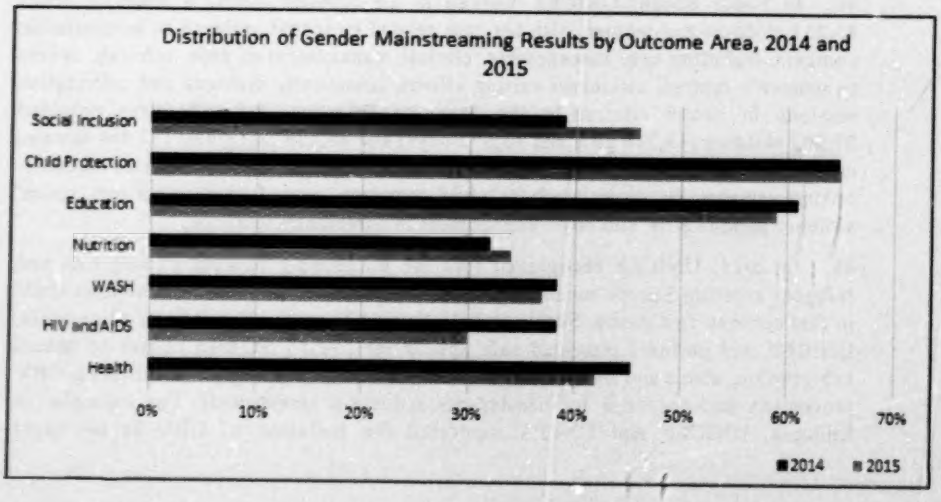


Figure 4



1. Health

43. The number of countries with costed implementation plans for maternal, newborn and child health care increased from 62 in 2014 to 64 in 2015. Support for maternal and child health (MCH) has been especially important in emergency settings. In Sudan, UNICEF trained 233 community midwives who helped to improve access to MCH services for 400,000 pregnant women. In the State of Palestine, the Post-Natal Home Visit Programme covered 49 per cent of all women in the postnatal period, reaching high-risk mothers and newborns.

44. In Pakistan, addressing the gender dimension of communications in the polio programme was critical to achieving the desired results. In the recalibrated polio strategy aimed at reaching missed children, UNICEF assisted with rebranding polio communications so as to project vaccinators as community protectors. A total of 2,152 communications staff (44 per cent women) and 2,291 polio frontline workers (72 per cent women) in 53 high-risk districts were trained using the new approach and, as a consequence, successfully alleviated common suspicions about their role. The strategy also persuaded reluctant families to increase women's participation in programme delivery, with the rate increasing from 35 per cent in 2013 to 46 per cent in 2015. These efforts helped to reduce the number of children missed due to lack of access from 500,000 to less than 16,000.

Output indicator	*2013*	*2015*	*Target (2017)*
Number of countries that produced an analysis of sex-differentiated infant and child mortality estimates	42	44	62

45. "Son preference" can result in gender-discriminatory provision of care during infancy, resulting in higher mortality among female babies, despite their biological advantage. In 2015, UNICEF conducted a systematic review of common childhood infections and gender inequalities and found evidence of discrimination against girls in care for pneumonia and other febrile illnesses in China, India, Iraq, Viet Nam and other countries. This is an important future area for action in increasing parental demand, as well as provider and facility support for the early diagnosis and treatment of girls as well as boys so as to achieve equity in child mortality reduction.

2. HIV and AIDS

46. In 2015, UNICEF supported the specification of gender-equality targets for pregnant women and girls, mothers, children and adolescents in the 2016-2021 UNAIDS Strategy and the Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework. Specific reference is also made to the need for countries to collect, analyse and use age- and sex-disaggregated data.

47. UNICEF interventions and leadership of the Inter-Agency Task Team on the Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission led to 21 of the 22 Global Plan countries implementing national policies to offer the Option B+ treatment protocol: lifelong antiretroviral treatment (ART) for all pregnant women and mothers living with HIV, putting the health of pregnant women and mothers first in the drive to eliminate vertical transmission and to support children not just surviving HIV, but also thriving because their mothers are still alive. UNICEF also leads programmes that support retention of mothers on ART and post-partum care in Côte d'Ivoire, the

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi and Uganda, thus saving mothers' lives and playing a major role in reducing new vertical infections of HIV among infants.

48. In countries with a high HIV burden, humanitarian emergencies can cause considerable interruption in the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and provision of ART. In Uganda, UNICEF supported the roll-out of family planning services, including post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to rape survivors, in all refugee settlements. As a result, the proportion of rape survivors who received PEP remained high, at 96 per cent. In Ukraine, UNICEF, through the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, supported the continuation of ART for one year for more than 8,000 women, men, girls and boys living with HIV, as well as HIV testing for more than 31,000 pregnant women and their children.

Output indicator	*2013*	*2015*	*Target (2017)*
Percentage of HIV-positive pregnant women in humanitarian situations who received treatment to prevent mother-to-child-transmission of HIV	54%	59%	80%
Number of countries that undertook a gender review of the HIV policy/strategy of the current national development plan, with UNICEF support	18	13	38
Number of countries with national policies to implement sexuality or life-skills-based HIV education in upper primary schools	28	34	38

3. Nutrition

49. UNICEF successfully advocated for breastfeeding to be included in the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescent's Health (2016-2030). In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, UNICEF successfully advocated for the extension of maternity leave from five to eight months, and in Viet Nam from four to six months, to encourage a minimum of six months exclusive breastfeeding.

50. There has been an increase in the number of countries with policies or plans targeting anaemia reduction among women, rising from 70 countries in 2013 to 91 countries in 2015, which is on track to reach the target of 100 countries by 2017. More countries are also undertaking gender reviews of their nutrition policies or strategies, although progress has been much slower, rising to only 21 countries in 2015, from 16 in 2013 and far from the target of 40 by 2017.

Output indicator	*2013*	*2015*	*Target (2017)*
Number of countries with policies or plans targeting anaemia reduction among women	70	91	100
Number of countries that have undertaken a gender review of the nutrition policy/strategy in the current national development plan cycle	16	21	40

51. UNICEF has been working across countries to scale up the provision of iron/folic acid supplementation (IFA) to women and girls in need. In Mali, UNICEF partnered with local non-governmental organizations to accelerate the scaling up of

community-based nutrition interventions in two target districts, increasing coverage by 42 per cent from 2012 to 2015. In selected districts of Bangladesh, the coverage of IFA supplementation among pregnant women increased from 32 per cent (2012) to 55 per cent (2015).

52. In 2015, 93 out of 122 countries reported national management information systems that disaggregated nutrition data by sex. Going forward, there is great potential to include additional gender metrics in information systems and analyses, as for example, communication messaging or decision-making support on nutrition for primarily female caregivers of children.

4. Water, sanitation and hygiene

53. In 2015, UNICEF led the preparation of the Report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the girl child, focusing on the time use, health, schooling and empowerment-related impacts of WASH in the lives of girls. The report highlighted the lack of age- and sex-disaggregated data as a key barrier to assessing whether infrastructure and programme investments are reaching girls and meeting their needs.

54. Water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in schools and health centres, including women-and-girls-only toilets and safe water supply, are a key priority for UNICEF. In 2015, direct support was provided to improve WASH facilities and programmes in 25,876 schools around the globe, more than double the 10,596 schools supported in 2014. UNICEF supported the construction of WASH facilities in 733 health-care facilities in more than 33 countries. In Kenya, an initiative supported by UNICEF is upgrading a network of maternal and neonatal centres of excellence by increasing access to sustainable water supplies.

55. UNICEF also supported women's engagement in WASH management and addressed the needs of women and girls in emergency contexts. In Ghana, 42 gender-sensitive community water and sanitation management teams were established and 100 per cent of targeted women and girls (25,000) were supported to engage in WASH governance through focused training packages. In humanitarian settings in 2015, UNICEF reached 1.37 million women and girls with MHM materials, thus surpassing the expected target of reaching 1.24 million.

Output indicator	*2014*	*2015*	*Target (2017)*
Proportion of countries implementing a national strategy to eliminate open defecation	63%	57%	70%
Number of countries with at least 50% of primary schools having access to adequate sanitation facilities for girls	32	37	65
Number of countries in which more than 50% of primary schools have water, sanitation and hygiene facilities meeting national standards	26	29	100

5. Education

56. As the lead agency and secretariat of UNGEI, UNICEF provides support to promote girls' education and gender equality through knowledge-exchange and sharing of evidence-based solutions. In 2015, UNGEI led the development of a consensus for the need for gender-responsive sector plans with the Global

Partnership for Education and the focus on the elimination of gender-based discrimination and violence in schools in Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action.

57. To translate these efforts on the ground, UNICEF, with UNGEI, has supported a four-country programme on school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger, which reached more than 275,000 students between 2012 and 2014. In Ethiopia, SRGBV prevention has been incorporated in the recently launched Education Sector Development Programme, and is well placed in the Gender in Education Strategy. In Côte d'Ivoire and Malawi, local protection systems were implemented across different sectors to respond to the needs of children affected by SRGBV. Mothers' clubs were also established to work closely with schools to provide counselling and support to affected children.

58. UNICEF uses data disaggregated by sex, location and economic status to assist Governments to provide the most disadvantaged girls and boys with equal opportunities to learn. Since 2012, UNICEF has supported the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan to enrol 380,000 children (207,361 girls) in 3,700 community-based primary schools. Since then, at the end of the third grade, 132,000 of these children transitioned to formal public schools. In Yemen, more than 22,000 out-of-school children in three cities (Al Ḥudaydah, Ḥajjah and Ta'izz), 80 per cent of them girls, were given access to formal and non-formal education. In Pakistan, UNICEF supported capacity-building for 10,000 school management committees, including a focus on how to make schools more responsive to the needs of girls, contributing to 211,379 girls being enrolled in primary school.

6. Child protection

59. UNICEF supported the revision of child protection-related policies based on gender analyses in 33 countries. In Argentina, UNICEF supported the Supreme Court to create a national registry that centralizes and systematizes gender-based homicides, including an interactive module to facilitate data entry for gender-disaggregated indicators. In Paraguay, UNICEF advocacy resulted in the adoption of a law in 2015 that prohibits domestic work under age 18, a common phenomenon among girls. In Papua New Guinea, UNICEF advocacy led to a parliamentary inquiry on violence against women and children by the Health and Family Welfare Parliamentary Committee. UNICEF also supported the National Department of Health to develop a first-of-its-kind database on service-delivery indicators relating to this issue.

Output indicator	*2013*	*2015*	*Target (2017)*
Number of countries that revised or improved their child protection policies on the basis of a gender review supported by UNICEF	33	33	70

60. While gender parity in birth registration is noted in most countries with available data, national experiences suggest that gendered roles and expectations can inhibit the registration of girls and boys at birth. In Papua New Guinea, UNICEF supported the development and adoption of the Lukautim Pikinini Act in 2015, which removes discrimination against children born out of wedlock, among other things. In

Cambodia, UNICEF supported interfaith dialogue on positive parenting and the protection of children from violence and abuse, resulting in the sensitization of approximately 529,436 religious leaders and their congregations and 136,614 children (48 per cent female). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF supported awareness-raising among 187,821 community members (including 71,901 women; 68,749 men; 10,618 girls; and 36,553 boys) on the prevention of GBV and how and where to access services for affected individuals. In Burkina Faso, UNICEF continued its work to eliminate child labour in informal gold mining, withdrawing 5,000 children from the mines and bringing the total number of children withdrawn to 25,182, with roughly equal numbers of boys and girls.

7. Social inclusion

61. UNICEF supports more than 70 countries in the design, implementation and scale up of cash transfer programmes. The programmes are primarily geared towards female-headed households, contributing to strengthening women's economic status, decision-making, financial security, self-esteem and labour force participation. In Ghana, UNICEF supported the expansion of the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) programme to reach 50,000 additional poor households, for a total of 150,000. UNICEF also supported the design and implementation of the newly launched LEAP 1000, an extension of LEAP to include households with pregnant women and infants under one year old.

Output indicator	*2013*	*2015*	*Target (2017)*
Number of countries with revised domestic legislation and administrative guidance in line with the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	55	89	110

62. In Rwanda, UNICEF supported the Government to adjust the design of a flagship public-works programme, to broaden the types of jobs available and to provide childcare at public works sites. In Nepal, as a result of UNICEF advocacy and support to GBV-related interventions, the Government increased its annual budget for women development programmes for the fiscal year 2015/16 by 27 per cent.

III. Institutional strengthening

63. The GAP specifies five benchmarks against which improvements in institutional capacity and systems to support gender-equality results are being tracked: (a) Programme expenditures on gender results; (b) Gender staffing and capacity; (c) Gender performance of CPMPs; (d) Gender performance on evaluations of UNICEF programmes; and (e) Effective knowledge-sharing and communications for promoting gender equality. Continued efforts to strengthen systems and capacity in the second year of GAP implementation have moved most of the benchmarks in a positive direction.

A. Effective knowledge-sharing and communication

64. The 2015 UNICEF Global Gender Network meeting brought together gender specialists and focal points, sectoral specialists and senior management staff from across the organization for shared learning, reflections on progress and prioritization of steps for further accelerating implementation of the GAP. The Deputy Executive Director (Programmes) participated, emphasizing the centrality of the GAP for corporate results. A formal reference group and extended network of gender experts and champions was established and a virtual team site was launched.

65. Regional- and country-level management team meetings frequently included GAP programming and progress on the agenda. Innovative approaches and field-based experience of implementing the GAP were also shared through network and special-topic meetings, video presentations, webinars and several conferences. Gender equality was identified by UNICEF as one of 10 organizational priorities for advocacy on the Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, UNICEF led and participated in forums such as a conference on MHM; multiple side events, including one sponsored by UNGEI and partners on ending SRGBV at the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women; blog posts as part of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence Campaign; and a commitment to investing in adolescent girls made by several United Nations agencies and a broad range of partners during the commemoration of the International Day of the Girl Child.

66. A Twitter "takeover" on the International Day of the Girl handed over the reins of the UNICEF global Twitter account to a group of young people who are passionate about girls' issues. More than 2.9 million people were reached with a Facebook post entitled "Let Girls be Girls" and 152,100 users were engaged with the empowering message "When girls are allowed to be girls, we all do better". This message was ranked as the third-most-engaging content on the UNICEF Facebook page in 2015. Across the communication and public advocacy activities of UNICEF, stories and content on gender, particularly around adolescent girls, have consistently resulted in higher engagement rates. The most engaging video on social media in 2015 was the story "Syrian 7-year-old tells the story of her journey to Greece", which attained 6 million views, more than 113,000 shares and reached more than 27 million people through Facebook. The media launch of the report *A Profile of Child Marriage in Africa* resulted in widespread coverage in top-tier global publications and media entities, including CNN (the Cable News Network).

67. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 68/146, UNICEF led the preparation of the 2015 Report of the Secretary-General on the girl child (A/70/267), with an emphasis on policies and achievements on WASH as they relate to girls. The report was presented by the UNICEF Deputy Executive Director (Partnerships) at the interactive dialogue of the Third Committee of the General Assembly on agenda item 64 "promotion and protection of the rights of children".

B. Gender staffing and capacity

68. The recruitment of all seven regional gender adviser posts (initiated in 2014) was completed in 2015. Gender capacity at headquarters was also strengthened with the placement of three senior gender specialists. In addition, two senior coordinators were recruited for the targeted priorities on advancing girls' secondary education

and ending child marriage and they were embedded in the relevant sections — education and child protection. The progress made in hiring and supporting high-quality technical talent on gender at headquarters and regional level can be attributed to the launch of a gender talent pool initiative at the P-4 and P-5 levels, which placed up to 15 qualified candidates for direct selection to gender posts.

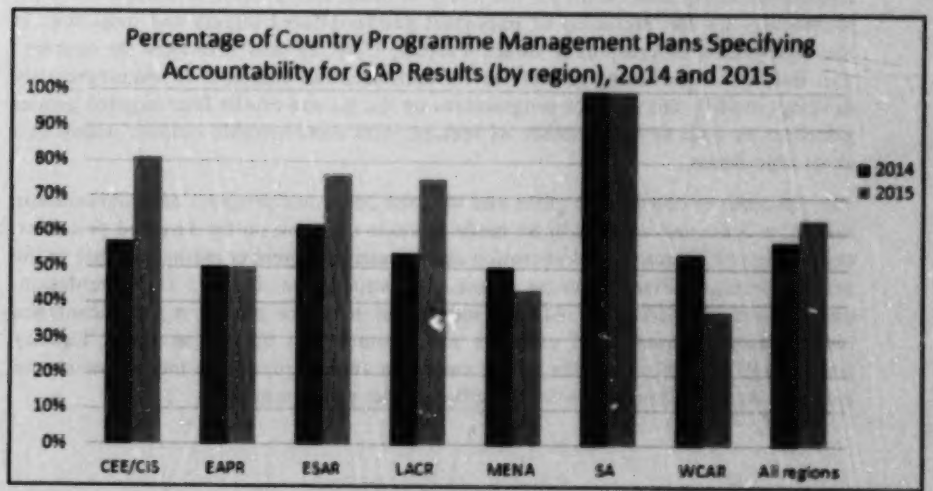
69. Gains were also made in bolstering gender expertise at country level, with dedicated gender specialists placed in 7 country offices and sectoral gender specialists placed in 12, across a total of 18 offices. Plans are under way to recruit gender specialists in several other country offices. To consolidate the progress in placing gender expertise in countries and to facilitate the selection of candidates for gender specialist positions, a P-3/P-4 talent pool has been launched. A recruitment package was also developed and disseminated to guide regional and country offices in meeting the standard on gender expertise set by the GAP.

70. UNICEF continues to maintain steady progress in achieving gender parity at senior level. In 2015, 46 per cent of all positions at the P-5 level or above were held by women, as compared to 45 per cent in 2014 and 44 per cent in 2013. Women represented 44 per cent of senior staff appointments in both 2014 and 2015, an increase from 39 per cent in 2013. While talent and excellence remain the overarching criteria for staff selection within UNICEF, recruiting offices and divisions were requested to first assess how the selected candidate would affect the gender balance within the team, with the aim of achieving an equal ratio of women to men.

C. Gender performance of country programme management plans

71. Building on regional progress in incorporating gender results in management plans in 2014, there has been considerable progress at the country level, with 64 per cent of CPMPs outlining specific country office accountabilities with respect to gender results and implementation of the GAP. This is an increase from 58 per cent in 2014, and with some regions reporting a positive trend (see figure 5).

Figure 5



D. Gender performance on evaluations of UNICEF programmes

72. According to the UNICEF Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS), the percentage of evaluations rated "outstanding" and "highly satisfactory" in incorporating gender increased from 47 per cent in 2012 to 52 per cent in 2013 and 51 per cent in 2014. As a first-generation rating system implemented by UNICEF, GEROS was reviewed in 2015 and implementation of the recommendations are informing a more robust ratings system. Concurrently, a guidance note on incorporating gender into evaluations is being developed and will be disseminated to relevant offices in 2016 as part of the GEROS improvement process.

E. Programme expenditure on gender results

73. UNICEF expenditure on programmes with a primary focus on gender equality increased substantially, from $377 million in 2014 to $444 million in 2015. In 2015, this comprised 9.3 per cent of total programme expenditure, an increase from 9.1 per cent in 2014 and 8.2 per cent in 2013. The relative increase was less substantial than the absolute increase due to the even greater expansion in overall programme expenditures from $4.1 billion in 2014 to $4.8 billion in 2015. The expenditures reported here cover development and humanitarian programming, and regular resources and other resources.

IV. Conclusions and the way forward

74. In 2014 and 2015, UNICEF has been able to deliver on a number of critical institutional and programmatic results specified in the GAP. UNICEF has facilitated and advanced the growing global commitment and local action around the empowerment of adolescent girls. In a broad range of partnerships, UNICEF has led important convenings such as the 2014 Girl Summit, participated in critical global processes such as the development of the reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health framework for the Every Woman, Every Child initiative, and built momentum for the inclusion of important gender-related targets and indicators in the Sustainable Development Goals. Further, UNICEF has leveraged its country- and field-level presence, as well as its multisectoral mandate, to simultaneously develop, modify and advance programmes on the ground on the four targeted gender priorities as well as in a number of sectors, with demonstrable outputs within this short time frame.

75. In order to consolidate gains and to make continued progress on programmatic results, a concerted effort will be made to scale up work on the targeted priorities, enhancing cross-sectoral collaboration and accelerating gender mainstreaming in the seven Strategic Plan outcome areas. Innovations in design, implementation, partnerships and financing will be sought out to make gender a significant and recognizable component of effective programmes that operate at scale. Equally critical will be to build on the strong emphasis already placed on measurement and evidence as the driving force for effective gender programming.

76. The enhancement of senior-level gender expertise as the core basis for building an organizational gender architecture has been another key achievement. However, the enhancement of gender capacity at country-office level and in the sectors remains a challenge, not only at UNICEF, but also within the international development field more generally. The supply of highly qualified gender experts with the right skill set, especially for work in country offices and in the sectors, remains limited. To address this challenge, UNICEF has launched a gender recruitment and staffing package, and in 2016 is planning to invest in the development of an in-house gender-credentialing system to more effectively draw from talent within the organization. The plan is to combine credentialing with a set of courses developed in partnership with an academic institution, so as to enhance the gender skills of promising staff, especially those with strong sectoral expertise.

77. The GAP strategy of prioritizing results, investing in dedicated gender expertise and channelling resources to take gender programming to scale is starting to demonstrate results. The strategy requires staying the course, not only within the current Strategic Plan period, but also in the following four years. While yielding incremental positive results in only two short years, the approach promises to yield exponential results in the next four to six years.

United Nations E/ICEF/2016/10

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
15 April 2016

Original: English

For information

United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
Annual session 2016
14-17 June 2016
Item 9 of the provisional agenda*

Report of the Ethics Office of UNICEF for 2015

Summary

The present report is submitted to the UNICEF Executive Board in accordance with section 5.4 of the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2007/11, "United Nations system-wide application of ethics: separately administered organs and programmes", and UNICEF Executive Board decisions 2010/18 and 2014/12. The report has been reviewed by the Ethics Panel of the United Nations.

The annual report covers each of the mandated areas of work for the Office: (a) standards-setting and policy support; (b) training, education and outreach; (c) advice and guidance; (d) the financial disclosure programme; (e) the protection of staff against retaliation; and (f) participation in the Ethics Panel of the United Nations and the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations. In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/12, the report also presents recommendations to management to strengthen the organizational culture of integrity and compliance. The report covers activities regarding and services provided to UNICEF staff, as well as consultants and other non-staff, to the extent applicable.

In accordance with the UNICEF Ethics Office Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, the Office had three priorities in 2015: (a) to increase the awareness of staff of the ethics of international civil service; (b) to enhance the understanding of staff of how to avoid or mitigate conflicts of interest; and (c) to promote a "speak-up" culture in UNICEF. The main means of making progress in these areas were the financial disclosure programme, confidential advice given to staff members and office managers, the launch and implementation of the mandatory online training course, support to country offices and headquarters divisions in developing and implementing training programmes, support to offices on follow-up to the Global Staff Survey 2014, the inclusion of ethical considerations in the development of policies and guidelines and the sharing of experience within the United Nations system.

* E/ICEF/2016/5.

16-06229 (E) 050516

Please recycle

Introduction and general information on activities of the Ethics Office

1. The activities of the Ethics Office were undertaken in the following mandated areas of work:

(a) Provide guidance and policy support to management on ethics standards-setting by reviewing and advising on the rules, policies, procedures and practices of the organization in order to reinforce and promote the highest standards of ethics and integrity as required by the Charter of the United Nations, other applicable staff rules and regulations, the directives of UNICEF and the standards of conduct for the international civil service;

(b) Raise the awareness of staff regarding the values and expected standards of conduct and procedures of the United Nations, and the importance of these for delivering sustainable results for children, through training and other outreach;

(c) Provide confidential advice and guidance to staff and management, at their request, on ethics-related policy and practice issues, including conflict of interest, financial disclosure, fostering a speak-up culture and protection against retaliation;

(d) Administer the conflict of interest and financial disclosure programme;

(e) Undertake assigned responsibilities under the policy on protection against retaliation;

(f) Contribute to harmonized approaches to ethics issues within the United Nations system.

2. The Ethics Office received 323 requests for its services in 2015, compared with 271 requests in 2013 and 261 in 2014. The introduction of the mandatory Ethics and Integrity e-learning course may have contributed to the increase in the number of total requests in 2015 because it contributed to increasing the visibility of the Office.

3. Of the 323 requests received in 2015, the largest component (47 per cent) related to services provided under the advisory and guidance function of the Office, followed by requests for training and for information on the financial disclosure programme (11 per cent each). There was an increase in the number of requests relating to protection against retaliation, from 2 in 2013 and 7 in 2014 to 12 in 2015. Figure I shows the percentage distribution of the different types of service requests. Table 1 summarizes the services provided by the Office over the three-year period 2013-2015.

4. Throughout 2015, the Office continued to work closely with offices across UNICEF, aiming to promote common and complementary messaging. Through collaboration, the Office also provided inputs and advice on issues of organizational ethics to offices with regulatory authority. The Office itself, due to its independent advisory nature, does not possess regulatory authority. Collaboration continued with the Division of Human Resources, the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI), the Office of the UNICEF Legal Adviser, the Information Technology Solutions and Services Division, the Supply Division and the Staff Association at the global and regional levels. Communication remained close with regional offices. The Ethics Office met regularly with the Office of the Executive Director.

Figure I
Number of requests for Ethics Office services by category, 2015

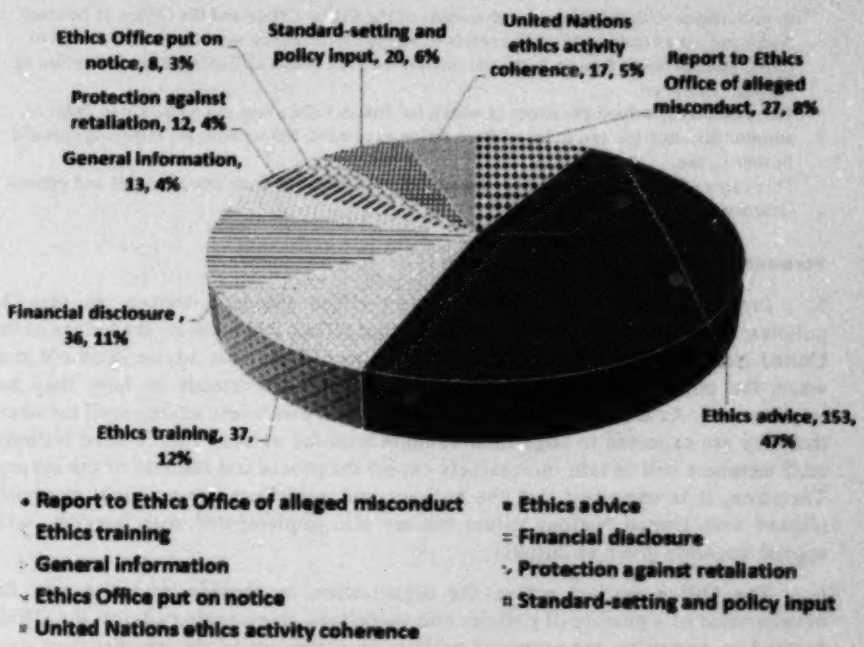

Ethics Office put on notice, 8, 3%
Standard-setting and policy input, 20, 6%
United Nations ethics activity coherence, 17, 5%
Report to Ethics Office of alleged misconduct, 27, 8%
Protection against retaliation, 12, 4%
General information, 13, 4%
Financial disclosure, 36, 11%
Ethics training, 37, 12%
Ethics advice, 153, 47%
Report to Ethics Office of alleged misconduct
Ethics advice
Ethics training
Financial disclosure
General information
Protection against retaliation
Ethics Office put on notice
Standard-setting and policy input
United Nations ethics activity coherence

Table 1
Comparison of the number of requests for ethics services by category, 2013 to 2015

Category	*2013*	*2014*	*2015*
Report to Ethics Office of alleged misconduct[a]	21	14	27
Ethics advice	121	122	153
Financial disclosure	24	1	36
General information	20	33	13
Ethics Office put on notice[b]	9	10	8
Protection against retaliation	2	7	12
Standards-setting and policy input	23	20	20
Ethics training	51	43	37
United Nations ethics activity coherence[c]	0	11	17
Total	**221**	**271**	**323**

(Footnotes on following page)

(Footnotes to table 1)

[a] In accordance with the respective mandates of the Ethics Office and the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI), reports of alleged misconduct were typically referred to OIAI, after no more than an initial discussion with the Ethics Office, with the exception of alleged retaliation.

[b] This category involved situations in which the Ethics Office was put on notice in order to monitor the situation and to take future action as needed, but without yet requiring specific further action.

[c] This category was introduced as a distinct category, separate from ethics advice and general information, in 2014.

Standards-setting and policy support

5. Providing advice to management on ethics standards-setting, so that the policies, rules and practices of the organization reflect and promote the values of the United Nations, is a key function of the Ethics Office. This advice does not stop when the policies or guidelines are issued but also extends to how they are implemented. As the organization fosters increased awareness among staff members that they are expected to align their conduct with the values of the United Nations, staff members will in turn increasingly expect the procedural fairness of the system. Therefore, it is important that the policies and guidelines are not only explicitly aligned with United Nations values but are also implemented with integrity, with special attention given to fairness.

6. The Office worked across the organization to provide advice during the development of a number of policies and guidelines. In providing advice, the Office focused on reviewing the proposed policies or guidelines to see whether they were addressing issues of ethics, especially conflicts of interest, including post-employment restrictions, and impartiality. The Office was consulted on a number of issues: the development of the child safeguarding policy; guidelines on ethics in research on and with children; engagement with the private sector; the contracting of goods, consultants and services; post-employment policy; accountability to populations affected by emergencies; and guidelines for external publications.

7. Collaboration with the Division of Human Resources continued to be important during the reporting period in the provision of consistent advice to staff on the organization's policy (CF/EXD/2012-009) regarding outside activities, such as those relating to board memberships, charitable activities and publications (see the United Nations administrative instructions ST/AI/2000/13 and information circular ST/IC/2006/30). The Ethics Office also had frequent consultations with OIAI, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of the Staff Counsellor to improve understanding of the risks that the organization faces if ethics are breached.

Training, education and outreach

8. The Ethics Office promotes awareness, through training, education and outreach, of the expected behaviour of those working in the international civil service so that the values of the United Nations become tangible. The training also aims to promote awareness of the cognitive biases that can make it difficult for staff members to consistently adhere to these standards of behaviour and policies in daily decision-making. The conversations on ethics address the recognition of conflicts of

interest and related dilemmas, challenges to impartiality and the risks posed when excessive conformity inhibits speaking up.

9. In June, UNICEF launched the new online basic ethics awareness course, adapted from the e-learning course of the Secretariat. The course was made available in English, French and Spanish. It is mandatory for all current staff and is included in the induction package for all new staff. As of 31 December 2015, 77 per cent of staff had completed the online course.

10. Ethical leadership is key to fostering an ethical organizational culture. For this reason, the Office worked with regional management teams, the Division of Human Resources (on leadership programmes for role-based training) and country management teams (on the role of leaders). Regarding role-based training, the Office provided training and materials on ethical considerations in managing UNICEF programmes.

11. In 2015, the Office received a total of 62 requests for training or training support and responded by making its services available. With respect to 37 of those requests, the office provided training materials and tutoring services for facilitators of local ethics dialogues organized by individual offices as well as briefings and other relevant information, including the identification of potential external training facilitators.

12. In addition, the Office received and responded to 25 requests for face-to-face group training, 16 of which were for offices in the field. Accordingly, a total of approximately 1,320 staff members received face-to-face training. More than 90 per cent of these staff members work at the country level. The figure of 62 requests for training and training support does not include shorter ad hoc briefings of groups or individuals on site, leadership training or support to local training via Skype or other special training. It also does not include the number of Ethics Dialogue Facilitators trained using web-based methods. No specific separate numeric record was kept for such ad hoc or web-based training activities.

13. In order to foster a speak-up culture, the face-to-face training explains how the process for protection against retaliation works. The Office anticipates that by better understanding the process, staff will feel more comfortable speaking up and will use the protection mechanism correctly.

14. The Office, in collaboration with the regional offices and the Division of Human Resources, piloted the Ethics Dialogue Facilitator initiative in late 2013, with the aim of enabling country offices to carry out shorter but more frequent ethics dialogues in order to promote a habit of ethical reflection at the time of decision-making. In 2014, the initiative was taken to scale, resulting in the web-based training of a total of 150 Facilitators in 71 countries. In 2015, case study-based follow-up training was provided in one region. On the basis of that experience, an institutional contract was established to develop case studies and to provide Facilitators with web-based training on their use in their offices. Thirty Facilitators were trained in English, French or Spanish. Going forward, the Ethics Office will review the use of country-based Ethics Dialogue Facilitators and consider whether the initiative has been successful.

15. The Ethics Office values its collaboration with the Supply Division, which conducts training on managing procurement and contracts. Integrity in procurement and contracts management is part of the basic training package. In 2015, the Supply Division conducted 15 sessions on integrity issues with a total of 348 participants. Among these were 176 staff members from offices and divisions other than the Supply Division, with 139 from field offices and 37 from headquarters. The Office also supported the Supply Division by providing it with case studies and other information for the development of an e-learning module on procurement, planned for launch later in 2016. The Office continues to exchange information and experiences with the Supply Division training team.

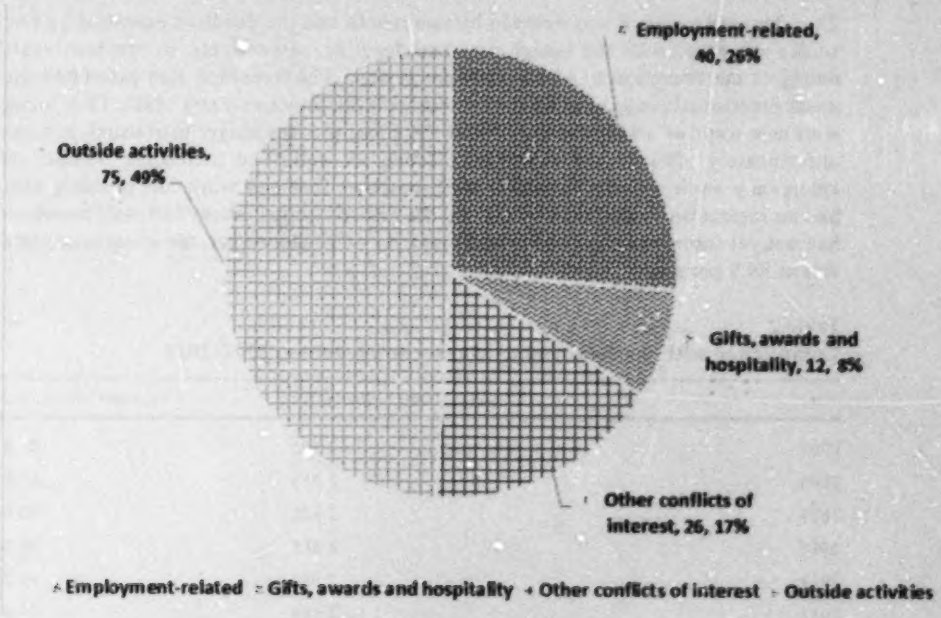
Advice and guidance

16. The Ethics Office received 153 requests for ethics advice in 2015 compared with 121 in 2013 and 122 in 2014. As shown in figure II, almost half of the requests (49 per cent) were related to the outside activities of staff members. While the majority of requests came from individual staff members, many were from managers seeking advice on addressing ethical dilemmas at UNICEF regarding outside entities or on responding to staff requests and questions. Within the above-mentioned broad categories, the Office noted requests for advice regarding personal social media, post-employment restrictions and the mitigation of conflicts of interests that originate from staff members' participation in outside activities.

17. Close to a quarter of requests were related to employment. These were often connected to performance management and interpersonal problems, usually between a staff member and a supervisor. Concerns of sexual harassment also came up. Staff members lack confidence in the established mechanisms for addressing sexual harassment, often showing scepticism about using the relevant formal channels. In 2013, the Office introduced the concept of a speak-up culture to foster the confidence of staff in the established oversight mechanisms and it has since reached out to senior managers at the level of the Global Management Team to develop measures for improving its ethical culture. Such measures include inter alia the introduction of the mandatory ethics online training and the training of the Ethics Dialogue Facilitators.

18. With regard to conflicts of interest, the Office maintains close collaboration with the Division of Human Resources in terms of advice provided. The majority of questions in this category continued to come to the Office through the Division, although there was a welcome increase in the number of requests from country office staff and management regarding the management of conflicts of interest for locally recruited staff. We were pleased to note that several requests for advice referenced the online training course.

Figure II
Requests for ethics advice by subcategory, 2015



Financial disclosure programme

19. The Ethics Office continued to administer the financial disclosure programme, the main objective of which is the management of conflicts of interest. To increase awareness of the importance of managing conflicts of interest, the Office, in internal communications with staff members, refers to this programme as the "conflicts of interest and financial disclosure programme". The programme has now reached its eighth year of operation and continues to be an important tool for fostering a culture of integrity in UNICEF. The programme continues to protect UNICEF against conflicts of interest and various organizational risks relating to the outside activities and financial engagements of staff members.

20. In accordance with the Executive Directive of 2012 (CF/EXD/2012-003), all staff members at the D-1 level and above and any staff member whose responsibilities are identified in the financial disclosure policy of UNICEF are required to file a disclosure. In addition to preselected staff members who are required to file due to their level or functional title, additional staff members are selected in accordance with the policy, jointly by the Ethics Office and the head of each office, during the annual filer registration process. The Office relies greatly on the individual offices for selecting additional staff members according to a risk assessment based on their level and function. The number of staff members participating in reporting under the financial disclosure programme was 2,498 in 2013 and 2,594 in 2014. A total of 2,549 staff members, or approximately 20 per cent of UNICEF staff, were selected in 2015 to participate in the reporting for the period 1 January to 31 December 2014. The participants included staff members at the director and representative levels who became eligible to participate after the

Programme launch on 1 April 2015, and who were sent a notification to begin filing their disclosure in September 2015.

21. The 2015 launch was delayed by one month and the deadline extended by two weeks compared with the launch date and deadline, respectively, in previous years owing to the transition to a new software system. The transition also prevented the usual practice of prepopulating the system with the previous years' data. This, along with new ways of asking for data, made the filing process longer than usual, and has unfortunately affected the compliance level, as well. The increasing number of emergency environments in which staff members live and work has possibly also had an impact on compliance levels. By the end of August, about 130 staff members had not yet submitted their CIFD statement. As of 31 December, the compliance rate was at 98.9 per cent.

Table 2
Compliance with the financial disclosure programme, 2007-2015

Year	*Number of staff required to file*	*Compliance (percentage)*
2007	2 545	82.8
2008	2 556	83.8
2009	2 536	100.0
2010	2 365	99.6
2011	2 592	99.7
2012	2 694	99.9
2013	2 498	100.0
2014	2 594	100.0
2015	2 549	98.9

22. The review of the disclosures is a crucial step towards understanding the conflict-of-interest risk. Efforts were made to mitigate risks relating to conflicts of interest and to provide staff members with guidance on how to prevent conflicts relating to their professional obligations. The conflicts identified fell into two categories, namely (1) conflict-of-interest risks relating to the outside activities of staff members and (2) relationship-based conflict-of-interest risk, which related to staff with family members who work in the United Nations system. Out of the filers, 5.1 per cent were involved in some kind of outside activity. Having received guidance in previous years, staff have become more cognizant of the actions needed to deal with conflicts of interest. Thus, many proactively indicated in their disclosures appropriate mitigation measures, thus reducing the need for guidance notes. Overall, out of the 2,514 staff members who filed a disclosure, 15 per cent had some form of conflict-of-interest risk requiring a customized guidance note.

23. The verification process is an integral part of the financial disclosure programme and serves to improve the accuracy of the information disclosed by staff members. In 2015, the Office conducted its third verification of the disclosures. Out of the 2,549 staff members who were required to file, those who were verified the previous year (58) and those who had nothing to declare (299) were removed, leaving 2,192 eligible for verification. Slightly under 4 per cent (84 statements), diversified by location and grade, were randomly selected for verification, with the

distribution by region proportional to the population and the distribution by grade skewed towards the higher grade levels. Forty-four per cent of the selected staff selected were from the P-5 level and higher and 19 per cent were from the NO-3 to NO-5 levels. The staff members selected for verification were required to provide supporting documentation, including third-party documents, to validate the information disclosed in their statements. This verification process was the first to have been carried out using the new software that enables staff members to directly upload their documents to the system. In previous years, the only options were to submit documents by e-mail attachment or pouch. Seventy-five per cent opted to upload their documents. Seventy-three staff members (87 per cent) were successfully verified; three submitted partial documentation; three submitted no documentation; one submitted documentation but failed to submit the original disclosure form; and four retired or otherwise separated during the verification process.

Protection of staff against retaliation

24. Serving as the focal point for the policy on protection against retaliation is a key part of the work of the Ethics Office. In 2015, the Office received 12 requests, all but 2 from country offices, relating to protection against retaliation. Five of those requests were for information, resulting in the provision of policy guidance and other related advice to staff. In three additional cases, after the sharing of the policy and further discussions with the concerned staff members, it was clear that their cases did not involve retaliation. Advice was given on ways to address their issues. In two cases, the Office conducted preliminary reviews, concluding in both instances that there was no prima facie case of retaliation. The investigation of one prima facie case from 2014 was concluded in 2015. The OIAI investigation report concluded that the staff member had made the allegation of retaliation in good faith and that the staff member's stated intention to submit a complaint about inappropriate conduct appeared to have been the driving force behind the proposed administrative act that would have carried adverse consequences for the staff member.[1] The Principal Adviser, Ethics, reviewed the OIAI investigation report as well as the relevant background documents, agreed with the outcome of the investigation and made her recommendations to the Executive Director, namely, recommending (1) to cancel the proposed administrative act; (2) to have the operational basis for the proposed administrative act reviewed in an independent manner; and (3) to consult the Division of Human Resources regarding disciplinary or other action against the official who had proposed the administrative act.

25. A speak-up culture is important for an organization that aims to foster the alignment of staff conduct with expected standards and to consider various views and inputs before critical strategic decisions are made. Yet attaining a speak-up culture remains difficult for staff, in spite of the various mechanisms of formal and informal reporting instituted by the organization, as such a culture involves three tenets in which staff members must trust: (a) that a staff member can speak up without fear of retaliation or other negative consequences; (b) that speaking up is not futile; and (c) that working mechanisms to resolve questions of misconduct or other disputes are applied fairly. Thus, the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) in the

[1] The proposed administrative act was the abolition of the staff member's post. The Deputy Executive Director, Management, suspended the implementation of the proposed administrative act pending the outcome of the review of the staff member's complaint to the Ethics Office.

Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 on a speak-up culture was conceived as a composite indicator of the three tenets for the Global Staff Survey. Four indicators measuring staff perception, two related to fear and one each on futility and fairness, were used to calculate the composite index. According to the Survey of 2014, in terms of the KPI on speak-up culture, that 51 per cent of survey respondents perceived that they could speak up.

Ethics Panel of the United Nations and the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations

26. In 2015, UNICEF participated in 10 of the 11 meetings of the Ethics Panel of the United Nations. In addition to these meetings, the members of the panel frequently consulted each other in order to harmonize advice and practices. This process has been extremely useful in improving the quality of advice and contributing to the greater harmonization of both the policies used by the participating funds and programmes and their interpretation. Further information on the work of panel is available in the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Ethics Office (A/70/307), covering the period from 1 August 2014 to 31 July 2015, that was presented at the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

27. UNICEF also participates in the yearly meeting of the Ethics Network of Multilateral Organizations. The meeting is an excellent forum in which to exchange materials and to share and develop best practices. In 2015, the Principal Adviser, Ethics, participated as a panel member in the session on the harmonization and cohesion of ethics training within the United Nations system.

Recommendations to management

28. The first paragraph of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017 of the UNICEF Ethics Office, states that the fundamental mission of UNICEF is to promote the rights of every child, everywhere, in everything the organization does — in programmes, in advocacy and in operations. The focus on equity, emphasizing the most disadvantaged and excluded children and their families, further translates into action this commitment to children's rights. For UNICEF, equity means that all children have an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential, without discrimination, bias or favouritism. Ethical behaviour and decision-making are critical for UNICEF in fulfilling this mission.

29. In 2015, UNICEF launched the online ethics course and made it mandatory for all staff members. The Ethics Office received unsolicited messages stating appreciation for the course as well as an increased number of requests for advice, often referencing what the staff member had learned in the online course. To continue this trend, the Office recommends that the use of the new online course in the induction programme for new staff members be monitored by management in every office. Management has accepted this recommendation in principle. The Ethics Office has been informed that the Division of Human Resources is currently looking into ways to implement the recommendation.

30. The financial disclosure programme and the overall awareness-raising have improved the understanding of conflicts of interest. However, feedback received by the Office during and after training sessions and ethics dialogue sessions indicated that the understanding by staff members of conflict-of-interest issues and other ethics dilemmas needs to improve further. The Division of Human Resources and

the Ethics Office have also noted an increasing number of requests for advice on how to manage the potential conflicts of interest of newly recruited staff members, in particular for those on special-leave status from another employer. The Office recommends that a system be implemented to allow new staff, as part of the recruitment process, to disclose and proactively manage possible conflicts of interest. Management has accepted this recommendation in principle. The Ethics Office has been informed that the Division of Human Resources is available to work together with the Ethics Office to implement the recommendation.

31. The continued promotion of a speak-up culture is expected increasingly to enable the organization to address unethical conduct early enough so that it does not become an organizational risk. The benefits of a speak-up culture go further, however, helping to enhance open dialogue on innovative and strategic issues. The organization has committed to instituting tools, such as 360 performance evaluation, to achieve accountability regarding fostering a speak-up culture. The Office recommends that the introduction of such tools be expedited and that staff be consulted about them, as it is important that staff members perceive them to be useful accountability tools that foster a speak-up culture. It is also important to implement the next Global Staff Survey in a timely manner, in order to continue to measure the speak-up culture KPI. Management should strive for at least 80 per cent of respondents to feel that they can speak up based on the composite index used in the KPI. Management has accepted this recommendation in principle. The Ethics Office has been informed that the Division of Human Resources is taking steps towards a more effective performance management system which, in its view, will contribute to a cultural change that it considers necessary for an effective speak-up culture. However, the Division of Human Resources has also cautioned that a target of 80 per cent may be difficult to achieve in a short period of time.

32. The Office continues to receive requests for advice on perceived sexual harassment. The Office recommends that the next Global Staff Survey include specific questions on sexual harassment and that the organization develop an action plan to prevent and address sexual harassment. Management has accepted this recommendation with respect to the inclusion of specific questions in the next Global Staff Survey. The Ethics Office has been informed that the Division of Human Resources will include such questions, subsequent to consultation with the Ethics Office.

33. The Office recommends that a child safeguarding policy, internal to UNICEF, be developed as soon as possible, with the required involvement of all relevant internal stakeholders, including the Ethics Office, and management has accepted this recommendation.

34. Most staff members have personal social media accounts. Staff and office management have been asking an increasing number of questions regarding the appropriate use of social media. The Office recommends that UNICEF update its social media guidelines to enable staff members to use them in accordance with the standards of conduct for the international civil service. Management has accepted this recommendation in principle. The Ethics Office has been informed that the Division of Human Resources is available to work together with the Division of Communication to implement the recommendation.

35. The Ethics Office is committed to cultivating and nurturing a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability in UNICEF. Towards this end, it will continue to

collaborate with all offices and divisions, the Global Staff Association, Ethics Offices in the United Nations system and other stakeholders to continue to foster an ethical organizational culture.

36. Under the new leadership of the incoming Principal Adviser, Ethics, who joined UNICEF in February 2016, the Ethics Office is committed to further professionalizing the ethics function, firmly establishing the relevance of professional ethics for UNICEF decision makers at all levels of seniority and ensuring an integrated, harmonized approach between all the oversight and good governance functions of UNICEF. Under the new Principal Adviser, the Office will therefore continue to work very closely with OIAI, the Office of the UNICEF Legal Adviser and the Division of Human Resources. The UNICEF Ethics Office is strongly committed to applying the same integrated, harmonized approach vis-à-vis the United Nations Ethics Office and the respective Ethics Offices of the other United Nations funds and programmes.

United Nations E/ICEF/2016/11

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
18 April 2016

Original: English

For decision

United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
Annual session 2016
14-17 June 2016
Item 7 of the provisional agenda*

Annual report for 2015 on the evaluation function in UNICEF

Summary

The present report documents evaluation activities undertaken by UNICEF in 2015. It reviews the status of the evaluation function within UNICEF and reports on progress in implementing the revised evaluation policy. The report considers the governance of the function within UNICEF and efforts made to promote evaluation coherence within the United Nations system and more widely. It presents updates on performance and results and the status of human resources allocations for evaluation. The influence of selected evaluations is reviewed, illustrating how evaluation has been used by teams within UNICEF. Elements of a decision for consideration by the Executive Board are also provided.

* E/ICEF/2016/5.

16-06329 (E) 110516

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. Speaking on the topic of evaluation at the service of the post-2015 agenda, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, affirmed that "Evaluation everywhere, and at every level, will play a key role in implementing the new development agenda." The Secretary-General was speaking at a high-level event in March 2015 hosted by the United Nations Evaluation Group to launch a week of evaluation activities in New York. He continued: "Evaluation is not easy. Nor is it popular. But it is essential. The current constrained budgetary climate makes it more important than ever."

2. UNICEF recognizes the essential role of evaluation in supporting organizational accountability, learning and continuous performance improvement. UNICEF also acknowledges important responsibilities, set out in its revised evaluation policy (E/ICEF/2013/4), to work closely on evaluation activities with development partners at all levels and to assist in the development of evaluation capacity. In helping UNICEF to demonstrate results, promote accountability and provide evidence for better policies and programmes, evaluation contributes directly towards the achievement of the mission, mandate and priorities of the organization.

3. The present report documents the evaluation activities undertaken by UNICEF in 2015. It reviews the status of the evaluation function within UNICEF and reports on progress in implementing the revised evaluation policy, presenting updates on performance and results. As in previous years, the report considers the governance of the function within UNICEF and the efforts made to promote evaluation coherence within the United Nations system and more widely. Attention is given this year to documenting the influence of selected evaluations, with a view to illustrating how evaluation has been used by teams within UNICEF. Finally, elements of a decision are included for consideration by the Executive Board.

II. Governance of the evaluation function

4. The Executive Board maintains oversight of the evaluation function within UNICEF and upholds the central role that it plays within the organization.

5. In 2015, the Evaluation Office prepared and presented to the Executive Board the annual report on the evaluation function for 2014. This was complemented by a management perspective prepared by senior management. In response, the Board adopted a formal decision (decision 2015/10) in which it noted the progress made and called for UNICEF to further strengthen the function.

6. The Evaluation Office also presented four evaluation reports to the Executive Board, each accompanied by a management response:

(a) A real-time evaluation of the UNICEF response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines;

(b) An evaluation of UNICEF upstream work in education and gender 2003-2012;

(c) The formative evaluation of the Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) approach;

(d) An evaluation synthesis entitled "Cash transfer as a social protection intervention: evidence from UNICEF evaluations 2010-2014".

7. Within UNICEF, the internal Global Evaluation Committee serves a valuable consultative function. The Committee met in June 2015 to consider proposals concerning the strengthening of the evaluation function and the revision of the plan for global thematic evaluations. The latter was followed by a consultative process across the organization, which informed the preparation of an updated plan for global thematic evaluations for 2016-2017 (E/ICEF/2016/3), which was presented to the Executive Board in February 2016.

8. The external Audit Advisory Committee considers evaluation to be an important element of the oversight system and monitors the performance of the evaluation function. In its 2014 annual report, presented to the Executive Board in 2015, the Committee noted its satisfaction regarding the steady improvement in the quality of both central and field evaluations and advised management to further improve the timeliness and quality of management responses to evaluations.[1]

9. The Evaluation Office continued to promote understanding and the implementation of the revised evaluation policy and, to this end, prepared a two-page summary that was distributed widely.[2]

III. Evaluation coherence: within the United Nations system

A. Decisions of the General Assembly

10. On 24 September 2015, the General Assembly adopted an ambitious and visionary new development agenda entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".[3] Implementation of the agenda will be subject to regular follow-up and review, informed not only by systematic data collection but also by country-led evaluations. In the resolution, the Assembly called for assistance to strengthen, where required, national evaluation capacity.[4]

11. The reference to strengthening national systems builds upon the first-ever General Assembly resolution on evaluation (resolution 69/237), adopted the previous year. In the resolution, the Assembly invited United Nations entities to support, upon request, efforts to further strengthen the capacity of Member States for evaluation, in accordance with their national policies and priorities.

12. The need to strengthen evaluation capacity was also noted in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QCPR) of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (resolution 67/226), adopted in 2012. The QCPR emphasized the importance of evaluation and the use of evaluation evidence and called upon members of the United Nations development system "to intensify efforts to assist programme countries to strengthen national evaluation capacity in programme countries for the monitoring and evaluation of operational activities for development."

[1] www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/UNICEF_AAC_2014_Report-16Apr2015.pdf.
[2] www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Evaluation_Policy_Brief-2pager_Final.pdf.
[3] General Assembly resolution 70/1.
[4] See paras. 74 (g) and (h).

13. In 2015, UNICEF dedicated efforts to addressing the requirements set out in those resolutions by supporting countries to develop national capacities for evaluation. Particular emphasis was given to supporting the establishment of national evaluation policies and frameworks as well as national capacities for country-led evaluation. An effective approach has been to link evaluation capacity development to high-priority policy issues. For example, in July 2015, the Government of the Philippines approved a national evaluation policy framework that complements recent reforms in planning and budgeting. The framework was developed with technical assistance, training and facilitation provided by UNICEF and other partners. UNICEF is responding in a similar way to a request by the Government of Cambodia for assistance in developing guidelines for a national monitoring and evaluation system intended to support the timely monitoring and evaluation of the national strategic development plan.

14. UNICEF has also worked with other partners to support parliamentarians to champion evaluation and use it in their work (see section IV).

B. United Nations Evaluation Group

15. The United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) is a professional network composed of the evaluation units of some 46 organizations across the United Nations system. UNEG aims to enhance the coherence of evaluation across the United Nations system and, accordingly, supports the development of system-wide evaluation coherence through the application of agreed norms and standards; the development and exchange of tools and guidance; the undertaking of peer reviews of its members; and, increasingly, outreach and partnerships with evaluation initiatives within and beyond the United Nations system.

16. In recent years, UNEG has played an advocacy and coordination role with respect to the General Assembly resolutions noted above and is a member of the interim coordination mechanism for the independent system-wide evaluation of operational activities for development of the United Nations system mandated by the 2012 QCPR.

17. UNEG therefore plays an increasingly influential role in promoting system-wide coherence around evaluation. Accordingly, UNICEF continues to invest in and often leads UNEG activities. In 2015, UNICEF stepped up to play an enhanced leadership role when the Director of the Evaluation Office was appointed Vice-Chair of UNEG, with particular leadership responsibility over the UNEG partnership agenda.

18. UNICEF played a major role in arranging and hosting the UNEG Evaluation Week, held in New York in March 2015. The Evaluation Week included the high-level event, mentioned above, at which the Secretary-General spoke on the role of evaluation in the new development agenda; an evaluation practice exchange, co-chaired by UNICEF and the Global Environment Fund and hosted at UNICEF House, which was deemed highly successful by participants; and the 2015 annual general meeting.

19. UNEG operates through various inter-agency working groups. In 2015, UNEG established, for the first time, a humanitarian evaluation interest group. The aim of the group is to (a) promote humanitarian evaluation; (b) ensure that relevant criteria,

as required by United Nations evaluation norms, rules and guidelines, are adequately taken into account; and (c) improve the quality of humanitarian evaluations produced by United Nations entities. UNICEF is part of this group. The first joint activity is a desk review of humanitarian principles intended to improve understanding of how the core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence are evaluated, and to highlight good practices, challenges and opportunities.

20. In November 2015, UNEG formalized a partnership with another evaluation network, the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE), which brings together national evaluation associations around the globe. The informal alliance between United Nations entities, IOCE and other organizations, together known as EvalPartners, has over the past several years established itself as major influence by mean of its advocacy for the increased use of evaluation and for the strengthening of evaluation capacities. Further details appear in section IV.

C. Inter-agency evaluations

21. Inter-agency evaluations conducted jointly by United Nations entities provide an important avenue for strengthening evaluation coherence. These have taken various forms and UNICEF has played an active supporting role in each, including by providing technical and management input as well as some financial contributions.

22. Two joint evaluations have been launched under the independent system-wide evaluation mechanism (ISWE), mandated by the General Assembly in the 2012 QCPR. This mechanism, with the involvement of a number of actors, including UNEG, is testing an approach intended to put independent evaluation of system-wide issues on a sound footing. UNICEF, with others, has provided financial and technical support. Two topics were chosen for pilot evaluations:

(a) Meta-evaluation and synthesis of United Nations Development Assistance Framework evaluations, with a particular emphasis on poverty eradication. This evaluation was approaching completion at the end of 2015;

(b) Evaluation of the contribution of the United Nations development system to strengthening national capacities for statistical analysis and data collection to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals. The inception report for this evaluation was completed at the end of 2015.

23. A thematic evaluation to assess Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition (REACH Initiative) provided evidence and options to guide further action.[5] The evaluation was undertaken jointly by the World Food Programme (WFP) as the lead agency, along with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF.

24. In 2015, the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) Group undertook two joint evaluations of the United Nations response to major humanitarian emergencies. The IAHE Group, coordinated by the Office for the Coordination of

[5] www.wfp.org/content/faowfpunicefwfpwhodfatd-canada-joint-evaluation-renewed-effort-against-child-hunger-and-unde.

Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), operates under the auspices of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The IAHE Group works to pursue concerted action on evaluation matters relating to humanitarian issues. The inter-agency humanitarian evaluations, nearing completion at the end of 2015, were concerned with, respectively, the response to the conflict in South Sudan and the response to the crisis in the Central African Republic.

25. These inter-agency humanitarian evaluations have generated important findings for the United Nations system. Protracted emergencies, such as that in South Sudan, are typically embedded in long-term patterns of conflict and underdevelopment. Programmes should therefore support efforts across the spectrum of relief, recovery, development and resilience; targeting must address the needs of large populations that may be difficult to reach; and, to enhance sustainability, national and local stakeholders need to be closely involved in the response.

IV. Evaluation coherence: global

A. Development networks

26. In 2012, UNICEF co-founded EvalPartners, a global network aimed at reinforcing innovative partnerships to enhance the evaluation capacities of civil society organizations, influence policymakers and advocate for stronger national evaluation systems.[6] The other founding partner was the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE), a network that brings together national evaluation associations around the globe. Many agencies and institutions have since joined EvalPartners, which has fostered a wide range of evaluation capacity-development initiatives, including peer-to-peer interactions to promote South-South and triangular cooperation among development evaluation associations. An evaluation of EvalPartners' activities, undertaken in 2015, confirmed that the network has established itself as major influence in evaluation activities around the globe, while identifying several areas requiring attention in order for EvalPartners to develop further.[7] As noted above, UNEG and IOCE have now formalized the core partnership, co-chaired by the President of IOCE and the UNEG Vice-Chair for Partnerships, who is also, at present, the Director of the UNICEF Evaluation Office.

27. In 2014, EvalPartners members designated 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation or "EvalYear" and organized more than 90 events around the globe. This culminated in a highly successful Evaluation Week in Nepal that brought together evaluators, academics, activists, officials, government ministers and parliamentarians for meetings on evaluation. These included the biennial Global EvalPartners Forum, which was addressed by the Prime Minister of Nepal, and a landmark assembly at the Parliament of Nepal, chaired by the Speaker of Parliament.

28. A key output from the Global EvalPartners Forum was the finalization and approval of the Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020, which focuses on evaluation

[6] www.mymande.org/evalpartners.

[7] www.mymande.org/sites/default/files/files/EvalPartners-Evaluation-Executive-Summary-(2015_02_03).pdf.

capacity development and professionalization at the level of individual evaluators and institutions concerned with evaluation as well as within the wider field of those concerned with commissioning, authorizing or financing evaluation activities, thereby creating an enabling environment for evaluation. UNICEF was a major contributor throughout and is arranging the publication of the Global Evaluation Agenda on behalf of EvalPartners.

29. The Global Forum also saw the launch of several subnetworks within EvalPartners, including EvalSDGs, aimed at advocating for the evaluation of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in the framework of the 2030 Agenda. Other EvalPartners subnetworks include EvalGender+, which focuses on evaluation around equity and gender equality; EvalYouth, which aims to advance the skills and knowledge of young evaluators; and EvalIndigenous, which aims to improve the participation of indigenous people in the planning and evaluation of the development processes that affect them. UNICEF plays a leadership role in EvalSDG and is engaged in the other networks.

30. In related activities, UNICEF has also worked with EvalPartners to engage parliamentarians in support of evaluation and to encourage them to use it in their work. In several regions, a parliamentarians' forum has been set up and, in November 2015, the Global Parliamentarians' Forum for Development Evaluation was launched.

31. UNICEF continued to support the development and update of a global evaluation web platform known as My M&E (monitoring and evaluation), which is associated with EvalPartners. UNICEF has contributed to the learning resources available through My M&E, in particular the finalization and launch of an e-learning course in Arabic, featuring 33 eminent evaluation specialists.[8] UNICEF has also continued to support the growing number of global, regional and national evaluation conferences and conclaves that help to promote evaluation capacity and coherence.

Humanitarian networks

32. In the field of the evaluation of humanitarian action, UNICEF has played a key role in the IAHE Group and in the launch of the UNEG Humanitarian Evaluation Interest Group. In addition, UNICEF continued to work with the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP). In 2015, one of the network's key outputs was the final version of the "Evaluation of humanitarian action pilot guide" and a companion online training course based on it. More than 2,200 people have taken the training course since its inception.

33. The ALNAP guide also provided the basis for an initiative launched in 2015 by the Evaluation Office to build capacity within UNICEF country offices for the evaluation of humanitarian action. As few evaluations of humanitarian action are undertaken by UNICEF at the country level, this ongoing initiative takes a hands-on approach, providing training and support to country offices that commit to undertaking such evaluations. Further details appear in section VI.

[8] www.mymande.org/elearning.

V. The evaluation function in UNICEF: key performance information and analysis

Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System

34. The information reported in this section is derived mainly from the Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS). The system provides for the independent assessment and rating of reports on country, regional and global evaluations; feedback on the quality of reports to offices; and the compilation of performance information into a management information dashboard. GEROS quality ratings are based on careful, systematic assessments made by external reviewers, using criteria based on UNEG standards.

35. Since GEROS was set up in 2010, adjustments to update and strengthen it have been reported to the Executive Board at various times, most recently in 2015 (see I/ICEF/2015/10). In 2015, a comprehensive external review was conducted. The review found GEROS to be highly relevant, as it contributes to the evaluation function of UNICEF, to quality control at the regional and country levels and to decision-making within the organization. Evaluation capacity has been improved through GEROS feedback, and the quality of evaluation reports and, by implication, of evaluation processes, has consistently improved over the years. The reports to management and the Board on evaluation quality have been used in making decisions to strengthen systems and processes for better results. The assessment also found that the costs for implementing GEROS were reasonable and that GEROS had considerable potential to further enhance knowledge management in UNICEF.

36. While the assessment reconfirmed the relevance and value of GEROS, several improvements were proposed. Recommendations called for a less complex rating tool; the updating of current guidance documents; locating and bringing into GEROS evaluations that are incorrectly labelled "studies" or "reviews"; instituting a policy of the prompt uploading of evaluation reports and the timely production of reviews and feedback; improving the dissemination of GEROS results; increasing consistency by further strengthening coordination between the Evaluation Office and the Office of Research; and undertaking regular reviews of the GEROS system to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

37. The Evaluation Office believes that the review has been relevant and useful and, in consultation with other offices, is preparing a management response. Action to address agreed recommendations will be reported to the Executive Board at a future date.

Performance overview

38. A suite of six key performance indicators (KPIs) provides a general overview of performance trends in 2015, supplemented by information from previous years. In most years a seventh KPI is presented on the implementation of the plan for global thematic evaluations, which are evaluations undertaken by the Evaluation Office. It is omitted in the present report because progress was reported in the plan for global thematic evaluations 2014-2017: review and update for 2016-2017 (E/ICEF/2016/3), presented to the Executive Board at its first regular session in 2016.

39. On the basis of the analysis in the following section, four major conclusions are warranted:

(a) For the third consecutive year, UNICEF offices reported the completion of fewer than 100 evaluation reports. This number seems anomalous, considering that financial investments in evaluation and the human resources base have both been increasing. Understanding what drives and constrains coverage and completion requires further examination and analysis;

(b) The quality of the evaluation reports followed the trend first seen in 2013 towards a high percentage of good/excellent evaluations. The quality improvements have occurred together with a sustained focus on higher-level results (i.e., at the outcome or impact levels);

(c) Weakness in certain elements of evaluation practice continued to raise concern, namely in the appropriate consideration of ethical issues. However, this indicator showed significant improvement from the previous year, as did the ratings for two related priorities: the incorporation of human rights, gender and equity concerns and engaging stakeholders in ways suited to their capacities and interests;

(d) Budget use can now be tracked through the UNICEF Virtual Integrated System of Information (VISION). For 2015, the data shows that UNICEF committed 0.65 per cent of its programming funds to evaluation compared with the 1 per cent called for in the policy. This was a welcome increase compared with the 0.33 per cent recorded in 2011 and the 0.5 per cent recorded in 2014. However, the level of evaluation expenditure remained significantly below target.

40. It will be important to give sustained attention to the need for: (a) increased evaluation coverage in and submissions of evaluation reports to the evaluation database; (b) improvements in the implementation of management responses; and (c) reaching the corporate policy target for evaluation spending of 1 per cent of total programme expenditure. Given the high level of decentralization in UNICEF, addressing these issues will require further reinforcement of the planning, budgeting and execution of evaluations at each level of the organization.

Performance against key performance indicators

Indicator 1: Number of evaluations managed and submitted to the global evaluation database[9]

41. In 2014, UNICEF offices completed and submitted 82 evaluation reports, down significantly from the 96 submitted in 2013. Productivity by region varied from a low of 3 evaluations submitted in one region to as many as 16 in Eastern and Southern Africa.[10]

42. In its decision 2014/10, the Executive Board asked for more information on coverage. Globally, 74 per cent of country offices have completed at least one evaluation in the past three years and submitted it to the global evaluation database,

[9] In this key performance indicator (KPI), as in others, the figures refer to evaluations completed in 2014 and assessed in 2015, the most recent year for which data was available. Evaluations are generally submitted at the end of the year, and the analysis of evaluations completed in 2015 was not available for the present report, which was prepared in early 2016.

[10] Of the 82 reports submitted, 13 were submitted late. The data in the KPIs in table 1 are based on the analysis of the 69 submitted on time for the GEROS review.

but it appears that 35 country offices (26 per cent) have not done so. While recognizing that undertaking evaluation in some contexts is difficult, UNICEF needs to give attention to closing coverage gaps and meeting its accountabilities in this regard. Criteria for evaluation coverage are set out clearly in the revised evaluation policy (E/ICEF/2013/14).[11]

Indicator 2: Topical distribution

43. For evaluations completed in 2014, a breakdown of topical distribution shows that, over four years, the percentage of evaluations dealing with only a single sector can vary widely (see table 1). The leading sector can change from year to year: in 2013 it was nutrition and in 2014 it was education. Given the relatively small numbers involved, these are normal fluctuations.

44. Two particular findings are notable. First, only 6 per cent of the evaluations focused on humanitarian programming. This is disproportionate to the high (and increasing) levels of expenditure on humanitarian action. Second, some 9 per cent of all evaluations reviewed focused specifically on gender equality, in addition to paying frequent attention to gender equality within sectoral evaluations. This is a good result and maintains the similarly positive finding noted for evaluations completed in 2012.

Table 1
Topical distribution of evaluation reports, 2010-2014

Topic[a]	*Baseline 2010 percentage*	*2012 percentage*	*2014 percentage*
Sector-specific, by key results area of the Strategic Plan, 2014-2017	66	41	66
Child survival and development		26	23
Health			13
Nutrition			0
WASH			10
Education	15	13	32
Child protection	15	8	6
HIV/AIDS	10	5	4
Social inclusion	1	1	1
Programmes covering several sectors	34	43	16
Cross-cutting themes	–	10	9
Organizational performance/other	–	6	9

Source: GEROS reports, 2011-2015.

[a] Sector names now correspond to those used in the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2014-2017. There is direct comparability with pre-2014 figures, given the close correspondence of older and newer names.

[11] See para. 49: Evaluations will usually be undertaken: (a) Before programme replication or scaling-up ...; (b) When responding to major humanitarian emergencies ...; (c) Following long periods of unevaluated programme implementation ...; and (d) For each programme outcome result component, when expenditure has reached $10 million ....

Indicator 3: Types of evaluations conducted

45. The percentage of evaluations looking primarily at the output level continued to decline, as desired. Results at the output level should routinely be addressed by monitoring and review processes. Evaluations should focus on higher-level, more complex results. However, the percentage of impact-level evaluations fell sharply in 2014, and this figure justifies monitoring to ensure that programme impacts are fully evidenced over time, whether by evaluations or other methods.

46. The percentage of formative evaluations — those conducted early in the programme cycle to assess whether implementation is unfolding satisfactorily — maintained the relatively low level first noted for 2012 (see table 2). This suggests that multidimensional and real-time programme monitoring is beginning to provide much richer data for managers than conventional programme monitoring, thereby reducing the demand for formative and output-level evaluations.

Table 2
Types of evaluations conducted, 2009-2014

Type of evaluation	*2009*	*2012*	*2014*
By programmatic results level examined[a]			
Output-level evaluations	33	18	15
Outcome-level evaluations	24	30	68
Impact-level evaluations	43	52	18
By managerial intent[a]			
Formative-level evaluations	45	24	29
Summative-level evaluations	55	76	71

[a] Summative evaluations normally have formative elements as well, and impact-level evaluations may also look at output-level issues. This table records solely their primary purpose.

Indicator 4: Quality of UNICEF evaluation reports

47. The quality ratings have shown a positive trend in recent years, and this trend continued in 2014 (see table 3). The 2014 data show the highest-ever level of satisfactory/excellent ratings and the lowest level of poor ratings. This is the third consecutive year of excellent results. The GEROS raters noted a specific positive result for 2014: 88 per cent of the evaluation reports uploaded attached the terms of reference, compared with only 57 per cent in prior years. This allows more accurate ratings and supports the knowledge-management function of GEROS through the sharing of tools with offices considering evaluations with a similar theme.

Table 3
Quality of completed evaluations, 2009-2014

Quality rating	*2009*	*2012*	*2014*
Confident to act (*good* or *excellent*)	36	62	74
Almost confident to act (*almost satisfactory*)[a]	34	30	23
Poor	30	8	3

[a] "Almost confident to act" is selected when the report content appears to be accurate and the evaluation was correctly managed, but there is some shortcoming that prevents having full confidence. The problem is often underdescription in the report or a weakness in a small portion of the effort within a generally good approach.

48. The overall quality rating is a synthesis of many specific ratings. Two of these — stakeholder participation and human rights/gender/equity — are sensitive indicators of the mainstreaming of corporate commitments (see table 4). In 2014, both took a large leap forward.

49. As part of a more nuanced analysis of the appropriate inclusion of gender issues in evaluation, UNICEF is now conducting, annually, a specific review of evaluation content using the norms for the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. More than a quarter of UNICEF evaluation reports met (14 per cent) or exceeded (13 per cent) requirements, while 45 per cent approached but did not meet requirements and 28 per cent missed the requirements. While not ideal, this represents a major improvement over the 2013 baseline of 5 per cent meeting requirements, 60 per cent approaching requirements and 35 per cent missing requirements.

Table 4
Mainstreaming of selected corporate emphases in completed evaluations, 2010-2014

	Percentage of reports attaining a good or excellent rating		
Corporate emphasis[a]	*2010*	*2012*	*2014*
Appropriate incorporation of human rights, gender and equity concerns	18	44	60
Engagement of all stakeholders in ways suited to their capacities and interests	40	48	66
Ethical issues and considerations and the appropriate ethical safeguards are described	10	32	49

[a] Drawn from among the elements analysed in each report, based on the United Nations Evaluation Group quality standards for evaluations.

50. UNICEF committed in prior reports to pay more attention to the management of ethics issues in its evidence functions, such as evaluation and research, through a variety of initiatives. Preparatory work in 2014 led to guidance issued in 2015 on safeguarding ethics in evaluation and research and related functions. The discussion of ethics and the certainty of more oversight was apparently understood by UNICEF offices. Although the 2014 level is not yet satisfactory, at 49 per cent, it represents a

major improvement from the 2010 and 2012 figures. It will continue to receive attention.

Indicator 5: Use of evaluation, including management responses

51. Utility is a key evaluation principle. As evaluation quality has improved, there is good reason to capitalize on the time and funds invested in evaluation by making effective use of the results. The management response translates evaluation recommendations into agreed actions. At UNICEF, the revised evaluation policy requires the preparation of a management response for each evaluation. The Evaluation Management Response (EMR) system (composed of a database, guidance, training, monitoring, etc.) was initiated in 2009 with the aim of strengthening evaluation utilization by clarifying management accountability and follow-up to agreed recommendations. There are two key phases: (a) the initial response, detailing the full set of office commitments to the evaluation recommendations, and (b) subsequent updates on actions actually taken within the 12-month implementation period for the response. The goal is for 95 per cent of commitments to be fully implemented (recognizing that full implementation may prove to be impossible in some cases).

52. The submission rate of the initial responses to the database declined from 92 per cent in 2013 to 81 per cent in 2014, although it was still well above the 2009 baseline of 10 per cent. The implementation of agreed actions, including actions completed and ongoing, for the 2014 evaluations was 76 per cent by end 2015 and is on track to reach the levels attained in prior years of 86 per cent completed and ongoing seen after one to two years. However, this general positive trend co-exists with another. Over the past four years, about 31 per cent of agreed actions remained listed as underway for two years or longer after the completion of the evaluation. A further 14 per cent were either cancelled (2 per cent) or never started (12 per cent). Taken together, therefore, some 45 per cent of management response commitments were not registered as completed within the stipulated period. This represents weak performance.

53. To understand what lies behind these figures, the Evaluation Office commissioned a review by an external team of consultants. The review was launched at the end of 2015 to determine whether the EMR met the needs of UNICEF and, specifically, to examine the EMR system, its overall benefits and areas for possible improvement.

54. The results emerging from the ongoing review indicate that guidance on the EMR system is generally clear, appropriate and aligned with the UNICEF revised evaluation policy. The overall strengths of the EMR process include supporting accountability, transparency and monitoring processes. However, it appears that the EMR tracking system does not fully capture all of the actions being undertaken in response to evaluation recommendations. Many UNICEF staff believe that EMRs contribute to better planning and decision-making, but a smaller number feel that EMRs contribute to the increased exchange of knowledge. Although the UNICEF EMR system is similar to that of comparator organizations, the EMR process overall would be improved by increased clarity around roles and responsibilities; increased support; the provision of validating evidence; and greater partner involvement. The review also recommends increased oversight of compliance with requirements.

55. As with the review of the GEROS system, the Evaluation Office believes that the review of the EMR system has been relevant and useful. A management response to the review will be prepared following consultation with other offices, and actions to address agreed recommendations will be reported to the Executive Board in due course.

Indicator 6: Corporate spending on evaluation

56. Corporate spending on evaluation was reported to the Executive Board each year through 2011, when changes in UNICEF financial management systems led to data becoming non-comparable. However, since 2014, following the adoption of the VISION financial management system, it has again been possible to report on this indicator. In 2015, VISION data showed that a total of $29.2 million was spent or committed to evaluation activities within UNICEF, against total programme expenditure of $4.505 billion. This contrasts with expenditure on evaluation totalling $18.9 million in 2014.

57. The 2015 data show that 0.65 per cent of UNICEF programme budget expenditure was devoted to evaluation. This represents a 30 per cent increase from the 2014 amount of 0.5 per cent, and shows significant progress towards the policy goal of raising evaluation spending to a minimum of 1 per cent of total programme expenditure. Nevertheless, according to the policy target, UNICEF is underspending on evaluation. Among the seven regions, one has exceeded the 1-per-cent threshold (Latin America and Caribbean, at 1.2 per cent) while the lowest levels of spending recorded in other regions were 0.1 per cent and 0.2 per cent. Headquarters spending on evaluation reached 2 per cent, boosted to some extent by the reallocation of funds for the evaluation of major emergencies from the regions to headquarters.

VI. The evaluation function in UNICEF: human resources

58. Effective evaluation presupposes the provision of adequate resources. In this section, to capture trends over time, information on the human resources available for evaluation in 2015 is compared with baseline data at least two years old.

59. As of December 2015, 106 country offices had professional posts that included evaluation in the job title, compared with 100 offices in 2013 and 85 in 2008. Such posts also existed in all seven regional offices and in four headquarters locations (New York, Geneva, Copenhagen and Florence). Table 5 indicates changes between 2008 and 2015 in the number of evaluation professionals, with important disaggregation for levels 3 and higher.[12] More than 64 per cent of all evaluation positions were in the international professional category.

[12] Level 3 is the desired minimum level to ensure broad evaluation competence, but it is not required that posts be at or above that level.

Table 5
Growth in number of UNICEF evaluation professionals, 2008-2015

	3/2008	*12/2013*	*12/2015*	*Growth 2013-2015*	*Growth 2008-2015*
International evaluation professionals at level 3 or above	50	95	118	+24%	+136%
National evaluation professionals at level 3 or above	40	63	66	+5%	+65%
Evaluation professionals at level 3 or above (total)	**90**	**158**	**184**	**+16%**	**+104%**
Evaluation professionals at level 1 or 2	NR	90	95	+6%	NA
Percentage of evaluation professionals in field offices	84%	90%	94%	+4%	+12%
Percentage of female evaluation professionals at level 3 or above	42%	50%	48%	-4%	+14%
Percentage of female evaluation professionals at level 1 or 2	NR	40	36%	-10%	NR

Source: Division of Human Resources data, various years.
NR = not reported.

60. During the past two years, the positive trends under way since 2008 have intensified. The growth of 24 per cent in higher level posts is helping UNICEF to meet its corporate commitment to increase skills in evaluation and provide opportunities for career development in the field. The goal of gender parity has nearly been reached in higher-level posts and already exists within the international professional portion of posts at levels 1 and 2. UNICEF has also been drawing on the talents of professionals from both industrial and programme nations, and has achieved a 50-50 balance within the international professional cadre (65 staff from industrial nations and 64 from programme nations). The 140 national officers are from programme nations.[13]

61. Staffing at level 3 or above is taken as a proxy for the capacity to deliver high-quality evaluation. Offices with such posts increased to 84 in 2015 from 78 in 2013 and 53 in 2008. A further 24 offices had evaluation staff at level 1 or 2 only. Around 20 per cent of country offices lacked any specialized evaluation staff.

62. The growth in posts (24 per cent) over the biennium far exceeded the growth in offices with posts (8 per cent). The main cause for this difference is that better-resourced country offices have been increasing their monitoring and evaluation cadres. Thirty-one offices had three or more evaluation professionals, ranging from very large (e.g., Ethiopia and India) to moderate-sized offices (e.g., Bolivia and the Philippines). The commitment within UNICEF to provide humanitarian assistance is seen here in the many offices in emergency-afflicted countries that have invested in three or more monitoring and evaluation staff (e.g., Liberia, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen). Further, a full quarter of the UNICEF evaluation positions exist in hardship duty stations, in both the D classification (10 per cent of

[13] "Industrial" and "programme" are the official nomenclature used within UNICEF for country classification.

monitoring and evaluation posts) and the extreme hardship duty stations, classified as E (16 per cent).

63. Separately, two level-3 evaluation posts were filled through the centrally managed new and emerging talent initiative (NETI), bringing the total to 19 NETI monitoring and evaluation posts over seven years. Seven of the 12 young professionals who have completed their two-year initial appointment have secured a full-time position in a country office, fulfilling the goal of transitioning to regularly funded positions.

64. UNICEF continued to monitor the level of evaluation effort. In 2015, more than 90 per cent of staff members with evaluation responsibilities performed a second function (see table 6). The percentage performing a third job function increased slightly, mainly due to larger offices adding level 1 and level 2 sub-office-based monitoring and evaluation officers to support programme monitoring and other monitoring efforts, including MoRES.

Table 6
Professional job-function combinations involving evaluation, 2013-2015[a]

Number of functions in job title	*Combinations observed at level 3 or higher*	*Percentage (number) 2013*	*Percentage (number) 2015*	*Change 2013-2015*
1	Evaluation	9% (15)	9% (16)	0%
2	Monitoring and evaluation Planning and evaluation Research and evaluation	68% (106)	65% (120)	-5%
3	Planning, monitoring and evaluation Social policy, monitoring and evaluation	23% (37)	26% (48)	+13%

Source: Division of Human Resources data, 2014 and 2016.

[a] To maintain consistency with earlier reports, the data refer to posts at level 3 or higher only.

65. Increasing support to multiple evidence functions strengthens the UNICEF programme as a whole, but can also reduce the attention to evaluation. Periodic surveys have previously established that evaluation receives about 15 per cent of a monitoring and evaluation officer's time. A 2015 survey of such officers in two regions is the most recent measurement of time allocation. It confirms that the time and attention of monitoring and evaluation staff is a scarce resource under intense demand, and that the time given to evaluation in these regions, at around 10 per cent, is less than the prior estimations.

Table 7
Estimated allocation of time of monitoring and evaluation staff

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer task	*Percentage of time allocated*		
Considering your work in the past six months, distribute the percentage of your time in each of these tasks.	*CEE/CIS*[a]	*LAC*[b]	*Mean*
Situation monitoring (studies, surveys, situation analyses)	23	27	25
Support to the planning function/Planning Unit	16	16	16
Analysis and dissemination of data	14	13	13.5
UNICEF programme monitoring (level 1/level 2)	11	14	12.5
Supporting capacity strengthening of the national statistical system	12	[c]	–
Evaluation	10	10	10
Social policy	10	11	10.5
Other	4	9	6.5

[a] Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.
[b] Latin America and Caribbean.
[c] The LAC survey did not have this option for respondents. Work in this task area is probably reflected in the "other" figure.

66. Staff training and support are important. In 2013, an internal e-learning programme was launched to strengthen the practical capabilities of UNICEF country offices to manage evaluations effectively. Certificates are awarded to staff who successfully complete the course. A total of 296 people completed the e-learning course entitled "Evaluation in humanitarian settings" and 7 people completed the more recently introduced course entitled "Introduction to the decentralized evaluation function in UNICEF". Following course completion, monitoring and evaluation specialists are invited to submit and implement a knowledge application plan to work towards an advanced certificate.

67. It has already been noted in this report that humanitarian work undertaken by UNICEF, especially its response to level 1 and level 2 emergencies, has been underevaluated in relation to the growing scale of humanitarian programming. In response, UNICEF has launched an initiative to strengthen its capacity to design, manage and use evaluations of humanitarian action. The initiative consists of a series of training workshops and technical guidance for evaluation managers and their government and civil-society partners, which are delivered at key milestones of the evaluation cycle. The training, led by the Evaluation Office, is linked to the implementation of actual evaluations that serve as case studies throughout the training.

68. In 2015, workshops were delivered in three regions and 12 evaluations were launched. The initiative will be extended to an additional two regions in 2016. It is intended that the exercise not only build capacity for undertaking the evaluation of humanitarian action but also, through the completion of the ongoing evaluations, that it contribute to knowledge and learning within UNICEF and among its partners about the humanitarian action that the organization supports.

69. The Evaluation Office continues to adjust its structure to meet its accountabilities under the Strategic Plan. In 2014 and 2015, the leadership function was bolstered and the thematic evaluation staff cadre reinforced. At the end of 2015, the Evaluation Office had evaluation specialists at level 4 or 5 in the following fields: two staff positions in emergencies and one each in health/HIV/AIDS/ nutrition, education, early childhood education (ECD), water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and institutional effectiveness. The level-3 cohort now consists of three temporary assistance professionals and one NETI professional. The health, WASH, ECD and NETI posts were introduced in the past two years. The section that oversees evaluation capacity development and knowledge management consists of a level-5 position and a level-3 position, each on core funds. In addition to the evaluation professional cadre, the Office has three General Service positions and two management positions (a P-5 Senior Adviser and a D-2 Director).

VII. Strengthening evaluation within UNICEF: influential evaluations

A. Using evaluations for decision-making, learning and policy advocacy

70. In UNICEF, evaluations are undertaken at the global and decentralized levels to provide reliable evidence to inform decision-making within UNICEF and among the organization's partners and stakeholders, as well as for well-founded advocacy and policy reform. Evaluation results are of limited value unless they are accepted and understood by UNICEF partners and beneficiaries, accompanied by intelligent recommendations and lead to a management response that is acted upon in a comprehensive and timely way. The Executive Board has asked for increased attention to these matters.[14]

71. The use of evaluation evidence is an important consideration not just at the stage of reporting evaluation results but throughout the evaluation cycle: from the planning and design of evaluation activities to execution and reporting. "Evaluation influence" is a way of thinking about the effect that an evaluation can have in terms of improved performance and programming as well as effective advocacy for better policies. Elements to take into account to determine the level of influence of an evaluation include whether the stakeholders accept the findings, whether they trigger action by stakeholders and whether they have immediate or delayed effects, both direct and indirect. Other aspects include how the evaluation was used in support of policy decisions or improvements in planning and programming and implementation, including improvements in programme performance and increased attention to such priorities as equity, gender equality and social inclusion. The following section of the report discusses evaluation influence, drawing on recent examples from UNICEF regional and country offices.

[14] E.g., decision 2013/13.

B. Analysis of some influential evaluations at the country and regional levels

72. This section of the report highlights the ways in which a range of evaluations have informed and, to some extent, shaped decision-making, learning and policy advocacy, and can thus be considered influential evaluations.[15]

73. Several evaluations influenced the programming approaches followed by UNICEF and/or its partner organizations. For instance, as a result of the evaluation on ECD pilot efforts, UNICEF Jordan intends to rollout a "*makani* (child friendly spaces) + ECD" module in urban areas in which ECD services are not already available. The multi-country evaluation in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) of a programme that is working with Palestinian adolescents as agents of change has been used by stakeholders to inform decisions and shifts in the approaches of work in the area of adolescent and youth engagement. It also strengthened UNICEF programming for adolescents in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arabic Republic and the State of Palestine. The evaluation of the "Let Us Learn" programme of Afghanistan showed that innovative approaches in education at the community level provide opportunities for out-of-school children and adolescent girls to complete their education. In Bangladesh, an evaluation of the strategic positioning of UNICEF in the country is informing the preparation of the upcoming country programme which, while maintaining a strong service delivery approach, will include an enhanced focus on climate change and disaster risk reduction as well as more upstream policy and advocacy work.

74. In Bangladesh, the evaluation highlighted the use of the life-cycle framework to achieve increased cross-sector collaboration among programmes. Similarly, in India, the evaluation of the protection and education rights of children demonstrated that the "convergence approach" (aligning several sectors to support areas or groups in a reinforcing fashion) would benefit the child labour and child rights strategies. The recommendations were incorporated into the country office child labour strategy currently under development and informed UNICEF programming in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly on work with the Education, Judiciary and Police departments of the Government. In Pakistan, the evaluation of the UNICEF Sanitation Programme at Scale led to the incorporation of a clear theory of change

[15] The following evaluations were conducted in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Republic of the Congo, the Syrian Arab Republic, Viet Nam and the State of Palestine: Let Us Learn (LUL) Formative Evaluation, 2014 (Afghanistan); Evaluation of UNICEF strategic positioning in Bangladesh, 2015 (Bangladesh); Evaluation of promoting the protection and education rights of children in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Maharashtra, 2015 (India); Evaluation of the UNICEF emergency psychosocial support response for Syrian children in Jordan, 2015 (Jordan); Evaluation of the equity focus of the Malaysia country programme, 2015 (Malaysia); Evaluation of the UNICEF Sanitation Programme at Scale in Pakistan (SPSP), phase I (2013-14), 2014 (Pakistan); Evaluation of the programme aimed at improving the quality of life of indigenous populations in the Republic of the Congo, 2015 (Republic of the Congo); Evaluation of UNICEF-supported Ministry of Education and Training's mother tongue-based bilingual education in Viet Nam 2006-2014, 2015 (Viet Nam); and Evaluation of phases III and IV of the programme Palestinian adolescents: agents of positive change — towards an environment promoting peace and reconciliation, 2015 (multi-country programme: Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine). Available from www.unicef.org/evaluation/index_90792.html.

in the programme roll-out, along with distinct, well-defined pathways of change for urban and rural settings.

75. Several evaluations influenced policies at the central or decentralized levels. In Malaysia, the evaluation of the equity focus of the country programme of Malaysia led to an enhanced partnership and engagement with key stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels, which was reflected in the country programme. Finally, the multi-country evaluation findings and recommendations for MENA have influenced the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in its work with adolescents and youth in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic.

76. Certain evaluations have been instrumental in guiding the scaling-up of programmes. In Jordan, UNICEF has continued to move forward with the scaling-up of the child friendly spaces in informal tented settlements programme in order to reach more children, especially vulnerable children. In Viet Nam, following the evaluation of the mother tongue-based bilingual education programme, the authorities at the provincial level have been using their own resources to apply and institutionalize the bilingual education approach more widely.

77. Other evaluations stressed the importance of equity issues. In Jordan, the makani approach in informal tented settlements will reach vulnerable children not commonly able to access UNICEF spaces. In Afghanistan, UNICEF oriented its efforts towards pursuing educational equity by providing educational opportunities for the most marginalized children, especially girls. The evaluation promoted the idea of a bigger programme that could contribute to addressing not only educational inequities, but also social and economic inequalities. In the Republic of the Congo, the evaluation of the programme was aimed at providing insights on how to improve the quality of life of underserved indigenous populations. In Malaysia, the evaluation led to the development of equity-focused strategies that addressed adolescents and girls, based on the mapping of stakeholders to identify key champions of equity issues. The research phase of the evaluation coincided with discussions on the country programme held with key partners. This helped to raise the visibility of the equity agenda, especially within the government ministries, in support of initiatives on behalf of vulnerable groups, including children with disabilities, migrants and stateless children.

78. These examples provide a brief indication of the kinds of positive influence and stimulus that evaluations can exert in a wide variety of cases. The challenge remains to measure and monitor such influence on a more comprehensive and consistent basis. This is important if UNICEF is to obtain maximum utility and benefit from its work on evaluation. The ongoing review of the EMR system throws some light on these issues, but further work is required to document and analyse the role and influence of evaluation, especially in the changing development context under the 2030 Agenda. Evaluation has the potential to strengthen, focus and accelerate progress towards the global goals, but it is important to understand more clearly what evaluation processes are most useful and how evaluation evidence can best contribute to global progress for children.

VIII. Conclusion: challenges and prospects

79. This report has outlined the continued progress being made in strengthening key aspects of the evaluation function in UNICEF, as measured through the GEROS indicators and other information. It has also noted the increased efforts devoted to promoting coherence in evaluation approaches and practices, notably through UNEG and the dynamic EvalPartners initiative.

80. However, it has also highlighted the rapidly changing development context and the challenges that must be met if swift progress is to be made under the 2030Agenda. Much will need to change if, as the Secretary-General insists, "Evaluation everywhere, and at every level, will play a key role in implementing the new development agenda." A key shift in emphasis here is towards country-led evaluation and the strengthening of national evaluation systems and capacities. At the same time, appropriate ways must be found to make the best use of evaluation evidence within the wider framework of data, information and knowledge generation and use. Adequate expertise and resources will be required globally to allow knowledge to be used effectively to unlock the potential of the next generation of children around the globe, in pursuit of a prosperous and peaceful world.

IX. Draft decision

81. The Executive Board

Takes note of the annual report for 2015 on the evaluation function in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2016/11).